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Philosophical Dissertations

ON THE

EGYPTIANS and CHINESE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

OF

MR. DE PAUW,

PRIVATE READER TO FREDERIC II. KING OF PRUSSIA,

BY CAPT. J. THOMSON.

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ERRATA.

Page 107, line 26, *for* Butter, *read*, Buttner.
141, and in other places, *for* Manethon, *read*, Manetho.
171, and in other places, *for* Lon, *read*, Lou.
191, — 16, *for* Tartan, *read*, Tartar.
194, — 3, *for* Zamoixes and Taxoras, *read*, Zamolxis and Toxaris.
207, — 18, *for* clock, *read*, bell.
238, — 27, *for* Nomandic, *read*, Nomadic.
240, — 25, *for* increaſes, *read*, decreaſes.
251, — 14, *for* fudres, *read*, ſeidres.
264, — 3, *after* Ptolemy, *read*, Evax king of Arabia, Juba, Dejotares, Hieron, Attalus.
281, — 18, *for* ſeduce, *read*, ſubdue.

Philoſophical Diſſertations

ON THE

EGYPTIANS AND CHINESE.

SECT. VI.

STATE OF ARCHITECTURE AMONG THOSE PEOPLE.

THE principal works erected by the Egyptians and Chineſe are conſidered here for the ſole purpoſe of diſplaying the eſſential difference of genius in the two nations. We do not therefore pretend to ſpeak of the principles and rules of architecture; for, however this may be the duty of the artiſt, it is not the object of the philoſopher.

After having examined ſome monuments in a general way, we propoſe to deſcribe more particularly the Great Wall, by which Egypt was bounded to the eaſt. That no perſon may be tempted to ſuſpect a connexion between this rampart and that of China, we ſhall point out an aſtoniſhing number of others, on the ſurface of the ancient continent. Some of theſe were ſo very extenſive, that, if placed together in a ſtraight line, beginning at the firſt meridian, and following the direction of the equator,

they would nearly have divided the whole of our hemiſphere. It is very remarkable, that the inhabitants of ſo many regions, on three parts of our globe, have endeavoured to fortify themſelves in this manner, chiefly againſt the Tartars and Arabs: but no appearances of any ſuch works have ever been diſcovered in America.

Any Chineſe at this day would be much aſtoniſhed to ſee the obeliſks of Alexandria, or the Matary, and ſtill more thoſe pyramids, ranged to the weſt of the Nile, from *Hauara* to *Gizeh*. So far from finding monuments of that kind in China, no perſon there ever heard them even mentioned. The emperor *Kien-long*, of the dynaſty of *Daj-dzin*, who ſat on the throne when this book was written, might perhaps have poſſeſſed ſome paintings leſs defective than thoſe ſeen in that country until the year one thouſand ſeven hundred and thirty: but not one of his houſes exhibited a ſingle fine column. The princes, who preceded him ſince *Yo*, if ever ſuch a perſon exiſted, employed no other than wooden pillars, deſtitute of all fixed proportions, in their palaces, pagodas, and tombs.

Thus we find the characteriſtic of Chineſe architecture to be diametrically oppoſite to that of the Egyptians, which tended to render indeſtructible, what in the former was not only fragile, but likewiſe very inflammable, from the varniſh, as well as the mixture of lime, tow, and paper, with which they fill up the cavities of the wood, when any

are

are found on the pillars, or the expoſed parts of the entablature. The town of *Nankin* having once caught fire, all attempts to extinguiſh it were uſeleſs. Not one houſe could be ſaved; and three days after the conflagration, the whole diſtrict did not diſcover even the ruins of a habitation. The town of Thebes, on the contrary, although ſacked and ſet on fire ſo many times ſince Cambyſes, preſents ſtill conſiderable veſtiges, of which ſome drawings and inſcriptions have been given both by Pococke and Norden. It is believed that the great temple of Thebes may be expected to remain longer than any of the palaces erected in the preſent day; and the boaſted cupola of Saint Peter's church in particular appears little calculated for durability.

Knowing the vanity of the Chineſe, and their addiction to hiſtorical falſehood, we ſhould reduce to its juſt value what they relate of thoſe marvellous edifices, conſtructed by their firſt emperors. Some, like the pretended caſtle of the empreſs *Ta-kia*, never exiſted; and the fabulous deſcription of that building has been invented by writers, who had no idea whatever of architecture. Such muſt we conſider them, when they venture to affirm, that it was built of red marble inclining to a roſe-colour; that the light entered there, as into one of the apartments in the golden houſe of Nero; that the doors were of jaſper; and that the height of the caſtle was two thouſand feet. Other boaſted fabrics, like the tomb of *Schi-chuan-di*, were con-

ſtructed entirely of wood; and the reader may judge preſently, what groſs exaggerations have been publiſhed concerning that edifice, of which not even a ruin now remains.

It is impoſſible to reflect, without ſmiling, on the ſimplicity or folly of the Chineſe, who point out in the province of *Chen-ſi* the ſepulchre of *Fo-hi*. Father Du Halde obſerves ſeriouſly, that if this monument be really authentic, it is more ancient than all thoſe on our continent *. But this piece of antiquity cannot be compared to the *Pike of Adam* in the iſland of Ceylon, where traces are pretended to be found of *Piromi* the firſt of mortals. Such puerile traditions, it is eaſy to conceive, can only be reliſhed among unenlightened nations, where hiſtorical criticiſm being entirely unknown, the ignorant regale each other with fables. As the lettered there know that their country was peopled by colonies from the heights of Tartary, they have ſuppoſed the tomb of their founder *Fo-hi* to be ſituated nearly in the thirty-fifth degree of north latitude, and the hundred and twenty-ſecond of longitude. This correſponds with the poſition of the town of *Kong-tchang*, in the province of *Chen-ſi*.

The Chineſe never knew the method of erecting ſtone buildings of two or three ſtories; and they are not inclined even to attempt any thing of the kind with timber. Thus all the towns of that

* Deſcription of China, vol. i.

country

country require three times more ſpace than expediency would admit; eſpecially as agriculture is in full force only in their neighbourhood. Mr. Le Poivre ſays, that in China the ſoil is ſpared even in conſtructing pleaſure-houſes; and the great roads, he adds, are nothing more than paths *: but ſurely it muſt be admitted, that this writer has been extravagantly enthuſiaſtic with regard to the Chineſe. The villa, erected by the emperor *Can-hi* merely through caprice, covered more ſurface than any of our third-rate towns; and every perſon knows, that the road leading to Pekin is one hundred and twenty feet broad. In the ſouthern provinces, where neither carriages nor any beaſts of burden are employed, becauſe every thing is conveyed by canals, the highways do not require to be very ſpacious: but we ſhall ſee preſently, that the interior commerce of that country is not always carried on by water.

Some travellers have ſuggeſted, that the Chineſe are led to prefer low houſes through fear of earthquakes; yet ſuch diſaſters are leſs frequent with them than in the Molucca Iſlands, and Japan, where they ſeem to be periodical. It is however very certain, that this precaution does not enable them to reſiſt the ſlighteſt ſhocks; and whole towns are ſometimes as completely deſtroyed, as if they were ſwept away by a whirlwind. This ſpectacle preſented itſelf in the year one thouſand ſeven hundred and nineteen at *Junny*, and ſome other neighbour-

* Voyage d'un Philoſophe.

ing places, where not a ſingle habitation was left ſtanding *. In the reign of *Yong-ſchang*, father to the preſent emperor, upwards of forty thouſand perſons were cruſhed to death in Pekin, although inhabiting dwellings little better than huts. Houſes might ſurely be conſtructed in ſuch a manner as to ſuffer little from earthquakes; but of this the Chineſe are altogether ignorant. They neither give ſolidity to the foundations, nor ſufficient thickneſs to the walls, which beſides are never held together by joiſts or braces; and therefore it is not aſtoniſhing, that they ſhould be eaſily ſhattered to pieces. At one time, the ſteeple of Nankin tumbled down under the weight of its bell.

Architecture in China, like all the other arts, is reduced to practice, inſtead of rules. The trunk of a tree, called *Nan-mou*, and not the palm, has ſerved there as the model for the columns; and although its ſpecies is not exactly known, it appears to belong to the claſs of larches, or firs. When the idea of the pillar was acquired, it might be ſuppoſed, that the proportions likewiſe would have been aſcertained; and yet they were never reduced to fixed principles. Mr. Chambers, who meaſured ſome parts of a pagoda at *Canton*, ſays that the height of the pillars was equal to from eight to twelve times their diameter †; but this is not generally

* Bell of Antermony, vol. i.

† It is even poſſible that Mr. Chambers had taken the dimenſions of a pagoda ſaid to have been formerly a church belonging to

rally the caſe. They are in reality eſteemed only for their great ſize, when conſiſting of one ſingle piece; and this is conſidered as a ſpecies of luxury and magnificence. As trees with all the neceſſary qualities cannot eaſily be found, the private houſes are ſupported by trunks, ſeldom exceeding thirteen or fourteen feet in height, from the root to that part where the diminution becomes very apparent. The *Nan-mou*, like firs in general, grows very lofty while young, and requires many years to attain much circumference. Thus the difficulty of procuring timber of ſuch dimenſions muſt have determined the Chineſe to prefer this tree to all others. In a pagoda near *Nankin*, ſome are now ſeen upwards of five feet in diameter: but thoſe of the new palace at Pekin, rebuilt ſince the fire in the reign of *Can-hi*, do not exceed two feet and a half.

It is ſurpriſing that the Chineſe, with ſuch ideas, ſhould never have attempted to work in ſtone, eſpecially as their whole country abounds with quarries. Their edifices, deſtitute of ſymmetry in the whole, or proportion among the component parts, are inferior even to thoſe of the Perſians and Turks. They extend the frieze enormouſly, for the ſole purpoſe of diſplaying a profuſion of ornaments, too whimſical to be deſcribed. Among the Egyptians, that part ſeems to have been deſtined chiefly to contain repreſentations of the ſacred

to the Jeſuits. He was beſides ignorant of a fact which ſhall be related hereafter.

animals. The Greeks therefore called it the Zophorus, and we ſhould have adopted that word, rather than the term *frieze*, which is altogether barbarous.

No particular place in the pagodas and palaces ſeems to have been allotted for the emblem of the dragon. It is ſeen every-where, even on the ſummit and angles of the roof, producing the moſt diſagreeable effect poſſible. The paſſion of the Chineſe is unaccountable in multiplying copies of this hideous monſter, which reſembles ſometimes a lizard of Iguan, and frequently a winged toad, with the tail of an elephant. It might have been preſerved on banners and liveries, as the principal piece of ancient arms; and this would only be conformable to the immutability of cuſtoms in the Eaſt. But the uſe made of it in architecture is not more reaſonable than the invention of thoſe French artiſts, who ſculptured heads of cocks, and flower-de-luces, on chapiters of the Corinthian order. A more frigid alluſion could not poſſibly be made to the name and emblem of their nation.

The Chineſe conſtruct their edifices in ſuch a manner, that the principal walls ſupport nothing, while the top reſts immediately on wooden pillars. This defective mode was never adopted, as ſome have believed, to prevent the progreſs of fire; and it has forced them to invent double roofs, extending one below the other; becauſe a ſeparate ſhed is neceſſary to protect the walls. Solidity is every-

where

where neglected, and without it architecture has no real beauty. The houſes, built along the river Canton, have indeed ſome works to raiſe them above the water; but in the interior provinces whole towns are erected without any foundation. In ſome of their towers, the firſt layer of bricks is not twenty-four inches below ground; and conſequently, as Father Trigault ſays, they ſeldom remain ſtanding during a ſingle century *. We muſt however except the *Van-ly-czin*, or Great Wall, which was conſtructed by ſeveral kings totally independent of the Chineſe emperors. Their intereſt led them to make that work capable of reſiſting the efforts of an enemy; otherwiſe the whole undertaking would have been abſurd. Yet the parts, which do not reſt on the ſolid rock, or are neglected for a ſhort time, ſoon fall into ruins. The thickneſs of the pillars, uſed by the Chineſe through mere oſtentation, does not contribute to the ſolidity of the building; becauſe their pedeſtals are not ſecured in the earth. The baſis is nothing more than a ſquare ſtone, laid on the ſurface of the ground, with a ſlight excavation to contain the lower end of the column; while the other is united, without any ſwelling, to what they may pretend to call the architrave. No chapiter of any kind is ever employed by the Chineſe; and this circumſtance, as well as a thouſand others, proves how much their manner of building differs

* *Ita raro unius ſæculi ætatem ferunt.* Exped. apud Sin. lib. 1.

from

from that of the Egyptians, whoſe imagination was greatly exerciſed in embelliſhing that part of their columns. They did not confine themſelves entirely to the form deſcribed by Athenæus *; for nine or ten different kinds have been diſcovered in the ruins of Thebais and the Delta. Finally, in a Chineſe pagoda we ſee neither ranks of ſphinxes, inclining walls, flat roofs, obeliſks, crypts, ſubterraneous vaults, nor any thing reſembling an Egyptian temple.

Many miſtakes ſeem to have been propagated with regard to the model adopted for the firſt Egyptian houſes; but the Chineſe evidently imitated the form of their tents. From all that we can learn of their primitive ſtate, they were originally Nomades, or Scenites, like all the Tartars; and conſequently encamped with their flocks, previous to their ſettlement in towns. This, without doubt, gave riſe to the ſingular conſtruction of their preſent dwellings, where the roofs remain after the walls are thrown down, becauſe they have no connexion with the timber-work. An incloſure of maſonry had been made in this manner round the tents, to contain the cattle; and ſuch was certainly the firſt ſtep, leading from a paſtoral and wandering life towards fixed habitations. Nothing in fact can have more reſemblance to an encampment than a Chineſe town, which, at ſome diſtance, is moſtly concealed by the ramparts, be-

* Lib. v. cap. 6.

cauſe

cauſe the houſes are all of one ſingle ſtory. Thus Mr. Bougainville, when ſpeaking of an eſtabliſhment near Batavia, calls it the *Chineſe Camp* *.

An hiſtorian, or rather a fabuliſt of China, called the *Lo-pi*, ſays that the firſt habitations of his country reſembled the neſts of birds. But this is an Oriental figure, and muſt not conſequently be underſtood in a literal ſenſe. It is not probable, that the Chineſe ever lived among the boughs of trees, like thoſe ſavages of South America, who through ſtupidity and lazineſs did not clear the courſe of the rivers, which in ſummer overflowed their banks between the tropics. Thus their only refuge for a part of the year was on the tops of trees, devouring, like monkeys and marmoſets, the fruit they found on the branches. By neſts of birds, the Lo-pi probably intended to ſignify low round tents, made like bee-hives, and uſed by the Tartars, who frequent Chamo and other ſandy deſerts. It would be impoſſible there to uſe wooden pins for pitching tents, like thoſe now employed by the Chineſe ſoldiers, which are almoſt exactly ſimilar to thoſe of our own armies †.

It is difficult indeed to conceive, how the Abbé Barthelemy could affirm, that the edifices on the celebrated Paleſtrina Moſaic reſembled Chineſe houſes. That learned man muſt have experienced ſingular illuſions in examining that monument;

* Voyage round the World, vol. ii.

† Military Art of the Chineſe.

and

and one example will be ſufficient to give an idea of all the reſt. He aſſures us that, in the barks on the Nile, ſome perſons are ſeen with round and pointed bonnets, like thoſe worn in China at this day; and thence he concludes, that the Chineſe were originally Egyptians *. But how could he not have perceived that this dreſs was not uſed in China before the year one thouſand ſix hundred and forty-four? It is really the Tartar hat, with which the people were forced to cover themſelves, when they received orders from their conquerors to cut off their long hair. Thus the pretended reſemblances, imagined without reflection or reſearches, between the Egyptians and Chineſe, vaniſh like chimeras. We have ſeen nearly all the engraved copies extant of the Paleſtrina Moſaic; and particularly that inſerted by the Abbé Barthelemy himſelf in the *Memoirs of the Academy of Inſcriptions*. Yet in none of theſe does it appear, that the barks uſed on the Nile, ſo much talked of by this author, have any more conformity with the boats of China than with the gondolas of Venice. The veſſels of all nations, from the canoes of the Hurons to the galleys of the Mediterranean, ſeem to have had nearly the ſame primitive form; and we are juſtified in aſſerting, that ſuch circumſtances cannot aſcertain the hiſtory of a

* Explanation of the Paleſtrina Moſaic.—The ancient Egyptians cut off their hair: the Chineſe, on the contrary, diſcovered the greateſt obſtinacy in preſerving it, as we have ſeen on the conqueſt of the Tartars.

colony

colony ſent from Africa to the extremity of Aſia.

Although the Chineſe are long acquainted with the art of making arches, they have ſeldom practiſed it in the conſtruction of their bridges. That in the province of *Jun-nan* conſiſts of nothing more than piles, placed at certain diſtances, and joined by iron chains, along which the traveller paſſes with terror. Men of any dexterity would ſurely never have executed a work of that nature. Independently of all other inconveniencies and dangers, the ruſt, occaſioned by fogs from the river, muſt affect the metal, and make it liable to give way when leaſt expected. Father Parenin, in his letter, places this pretended iron bridge in competition with all the great edifices of Egypt; and ſuch partiality in favor of the Chineſe is ſo remarkable among all the writers of his order, that we read their accounts with continual diffidence. Many other bridges are ſeen in China, where, inſtead of arches, flat ſtones are placed on poſts, erected at ſmall diſtances. The great number of theſe ſupports has been conſidered by ignorant travellers as highly ornamental; but the precaution is abſolutely neceſſary; otherwiſe the croſs ſtones, whatever might be their thickneſs, would ſoon break in the middle.

With regard to the famous flying bridge, ſo much celebrated in Europe, and ſo often repreſented by engravings, we are under the neceſſity of declaring, that nothing, ſuch as it is deſcribed,

ever exiſted. The author of the Continuation of Rollin's Hiſtory ſeems to inſinuate, that Father Kircher took the liberty of inventing this flying bridge, in a work publiſhed at Amſterdam, under the title of *China illuſtrated*. This Father Kircher, who is accuſed of ſo many things, had certainly very ſtrange viſions, and much effrontery in publiſhing them; but here we muſt do him the juſtice to obſerve, that he only ſpoke after the *Atlas* of Martini, as did alſo the anonymous compiler of the Wonders of Art and Nature *. The inventor of the flying bridge, however, wanted common ſenſe; and it is not extraordinary that an able French architect, named Boffrand, after examining the dimenſions, declared them to be chimerical in all their points. It is eaſy indeed to perceive at once, that no ſuch bridge could be erected by means of the Roman arch, or even of the Gothic, which is commonly employed in China. What has given riſe among Europeans to ſo many abſurd fables, but too grateful to the vanity of the Chineſe, is in reality the production of a torrent. It opened a paſſage under rocks, which were probably ſupported by a layer of earth, and in that manner produced a phenomenon not unexampled among the Alps. All the bridges conſtructed by the Chineſe are exceedingly whimſical; and even when compoſed of arches, they want ſtrength, as Father Du Halde obſerves, to ſupport loaded carriages: but as they form a very acute angle at the ſummit, no danger

* Artificia Hominum et Miranda Naturæ in Sina.

is to be apprehended from any thing of that kind; for even travellers have to paſs them by ſtairs. When the Chineſe are aſked why ſo much elevation is given to the centre arch; they ſay it muſt be ſo, in order that the barks may paſs without interruption. Inſtead of incurring ſo much danger, it would ſurely be better to make the veſſels lower their maſts, which is no difficult operation on ſmall rivers.

An obſervation of the utmoſt conſequence, and ſufficient to undeceive us for ever with regard to what the Chineſe hiſtorians relate of the flouriſhing ſtate of their country under the ancient emperors, concerns the *Yu-ho* or Royal Canal. That work, truly worthy of admiration, has been executed by very ſkilful artiſts, who underſtood levelling perfectly; and the mechaniſm of the locks they conſtructed is as ſimple as the effect is aſtoniſhing. Almoſt the whole interior commerce of the country is carried on by this navigation, which opens a communication with the ſouthern provinces and thoſe of *Pe-tcheli* and *Kian-nan*, without any of the dangers attending ſea voyages. Thus it is impoſſible that, previous to its being opened, the inland trade could ever have had great activity. Readers, who poſſeſs any ſhare of penetration, will eaſily conceive what ſhould be inferred here, and therefore we ſhall not inſiſt further on this point. But it muſt not be imagined, that the Royal Canal was made by the Chineſe; for their architects were incapable of undertaking any thing of the kind. That

aſtoniſhing

aſtoniſhing bed, by which the rivers flow into the lakes, and the lakes into the rivers, without their being liable either to dry up or overflow, was dug by the Mogul Tartars. It extends for more than ſix hundred leagues; and affords a navigation from one extremity of the empire to the other.

The conqueror *Koublai*, whoſe name can never periſh, was a well-informed prince, and a lover of the arts. He invited into China many learned Perſians, Arabs, and Lamas, particularly aſtronomers, geographers, and architects. The firſt were employed in compoſing almanacs; the ſecond made obſervations as far north as the fifty-fifth degree, and ſouth to the ſixteenth, taking the altitude of different parts of China, Corea, Tartary, and Tonquin: the third claſs began to make the great canal, about the year one thouſand two hundred and eighty of our era; and ſince that epoch, the appearance of China has changed entirely. The ſea formerly ſwallowed up three-fourths of the veſſels which attempted to paſs *Li-ampo*, in their paſſage into the gulph of *Nankin*. At length the Moguls, ſhocked at ſo many ſhipwrecks, took compaſſion on the Chineſe, who navigated ſo badly on the ocean, and had not ſufficient induſtry to open a way acroſs the continent. Not a ſingle veſſel is now loſt in paſſing the locks, and they continue to be kept in perfect repair by the vigilance of the Mandhui Tartars. Had theſe conquerors not appeared, it is probable that the Chineſe would have ſuffered this work, already much decayed in one thouſand

thouſand ſix hundred and forty, to fall entirely into ruins; and then the country muſt have been reduced to its former miſerable ſtate.

All the trenches for watering the fields, and the numerous croſs canals which communicate with the *Yu-ho*, were likewiſe formed by the care of *Koublai-Kan*; who beſides opened all ſouthern China to foreign traders. It was in his reign that ſhips were ſeen there for the firſt time from Malabar, Sumatra, and Ceylon. By theſe means the provinces began to breathe, after having been exhauſted by the rapaciouſneſs of the Chineſe officers, who required as many contributions in their own country, as if they had entered there as conquerors; and, pillaged in turn by victorious enemies, they were loſt to every ſenſe of ſhame or honor. *Koublai*, to prevent ſuch diſorders, augmented the pay of the army, which under the ancient government had been badly maintained, and did not indeed deſerve better treatment. After ſuch facts, the Chineſe muſt be conſidered as guilty of the baſeſt ingratitude, when they endeavour to blacken the memory of that prince. They blame him for having confided in men from the weſt, although theſe were the geographers and architects employed in conſtructing works, which would do honor to the greateſt monarchs. He was reproached beſides with loving women, and being attached to the Dalai-Lama. Yet all the emperors of China, prior to his arrival, had ſeraglios containing three or four hundred concubines, guarded by twelve or thir-

teen thouſand eunuchs. The Dalai-Lama was the legitimate pontiff of the religion profeſſed by *Koublai-Kan;* and in the midſt of his glory, and through a long courſe of proſperity, he never forgot that the conqueror and the humbleſt ſlave were equally in the hands of the Omnipotent. But although firmly devoted to the worſhip of his anceſtors, he never perſecuted the conquered for any of their ſilly opinions; and his conduct in this point was very different from that of Alexander. The Perſian Magi were continually tormented by the Macedonian, and they could not entirely preſerve the ſacred books of *Zend* from his fanaticiſm.

The Arabs, who travelled in China in the eighth century, found that country ſubjected to eunuchs, and peopled in ſome places by anthropophagi *. Various conjectures have been made on this report; and many tend to diſpute its authenticity. Yet the government of that claſs of men is an undoubted fact; and the appearance of China has certainly undergone a great change ſince that period. The revolution in commerce and agriculture did not take place until the reign of *Koublai-Kan*, the founder of the twentieth dynaſty. Then, likewiſe, whatever Father Goubil may ſay to the contrary, aſtronomy was firſt introduced there: but the knowledge, brought thither by the Arabs, Perſians, and learned men of Balk and Samarcand who followed the Moguls, was loſt a ſecond time

* Ancient Relation of India and China, publiſhed by the Abbé Renaudot.

at

at the extinction of the twentieth dynasty. Of this we have a proof in an edict of the first Mandhui emperor, published in one thousand six hundred and fifty: it sets forth, that ever since the expulsion of the Moguls, the Chinese were incapable of making an exact almanac; that their errors, augmenting every year, became a disgrace to the conquerors, as well as to the people of the country; and therefore it was necessary to abandon the pretended tribunal of mathematics to Europeans. They are still in possession of that office; and in case of their being removed, the first calendar composed by the Chinese would be grosly erroneous; for as long as they preserve their language and manner of writing, it is impossible for them to make much progress in any of the sciences. Some historians wish to persuade us that observatories are now seen in China, which were built three thousand years ago, although no monument, we may aver, in that country can reasonably be supposed to approach so great antiquity. The only building of the kind, known to us, is at Pekin, and that town was founded by *Koublai-Kan* in the year one thousand two hundred and sixty-seven *. The observatory must therefore have been erected posterior to the conquest of the Mogul Tartars, who, as we have observed, changed the face of the whole empire. With regard to some instruments, discovered on a mountain near Nankin, they were cer-

* The part of Pekin called the *Chinese Town* was not built until the year 1644.

tainly made in the year one thouſand three hundred and forty-nine.

The following obſervation muſt appear deciſive on this point: the latitude of Pekin is 39 degrees, 55 minutes, and 15 ſeconds, which is rather more than in the map of D'Anville; that of Nankin is 32 degrees, 4 minutes, and 3 ſeconds. Yet the dials and other inſtruments, employed at thoſe two places, were made to anſwer ſomewhat beyond the thirty-ſixth degree, and conſequently all the obſervations taken by the Chineſe were erroneous.

Having reflected on this ſingularity, which no perſon had ever explained, it appeared to me at laſt, that the inſtruments uſed by the Chineſe muſt have been copied from thoſe adapted to the ſchools of *Balk*. That town is ſituated about thirty minutes beyond the thirty-ſixth degree *, in the ancient Bactriana, where the ſciences began to be cultivated by the Greeks, who having obtained the government of that country under the ſucceſſors of Alexander, rendered themſelves independent, and formed an empire extending as far as India †.

Inſtruments, calculated for the latitude of Balk, muſt therefore have been brought to China in the time of the Moguls; and ſuch is the origin of the moſt abſurd error ever adopted in any country. At

* In D'Anville's great map of Aſia, *Balk* is ſomewhat more to the north: but an Arab named *Eben-Said* has placed it in 35 degrees and 54 minutes.

† Bayer, Hiſtoria Regni Græcorum Bactriani; and a memoir of Mr. de Guignes.

the

the arrival of the Jeſuits, the Chineſe maintained that all the towns of China were ſituated in the thirty-ſixth degree. This is acknowledged even by Father Kircher, who adds, that they had no idea whatever of longitude *. Thus they muſt be allowed to have been as ignorant of the hiſtory of the earth, which they ſuppoſed to be ſquare, as of the ſky, where they believed the planets to be equally elevated with the ſtars.

It muſt be confeſſed that the Romans, for ſome time, did really uſe a ſolar dial, formed for the latitude of Catania, without perceiving their error. Rome however had not then been built more than three hundred and four years; and that term is very inſufficient for any nation to acquire even the firſt principles of aſtronomy. But when the Chineſe fell into ſuch abſurdities, they had already exiſted as a nation, according to their authentic annals, during more than three thouſand years.

As to the obſervatory of the province of *Ho-nan*, it deſerves to be placed, with the fabulous palace of the empreſs *Ta-kia*, among the edifices which never exiſted. Father Martini is the only perſon who aſſerts that the town of *Teng-fong-hien* contains a prodigious rule of braſs, placed perpendicularly on a plate of the ſame metal; and he then proceeds to ſpeak of a tower, built near three thouſand years ago, where the pretended Chineſe aſtronomer *Tcheou-Kong* obſerved the movements of the heavenly bodies. This huge rule and plate of braſs have

* China Illuſtrata, p. 102. in folio.

been changed by Father du Halde into a ſimple inſtrument, and Mr. Boyſen, when ſpeaking of the town of *Teng-fong-hien*, mentions nothing more than the tower. Thus we find the obſervatory diſappears entirely, except a few heaps of ſtones, which are ſuppoſed to have belonged to ſomething of the kind: but if the learned of Europe had an opportunity of viſiting the ſpot, they might be at a loſs to find thoſe ruins, as well as the extraordinary things introduced by Father Martini to embelliſh his book. The whole work, indeed, is ſo ſhamefully incorrect, that it might with more propriety be called a collection of common reports than an *Atlas*.

If China contained any monuments of great antiquity, we might expect to find them among the tombs of the emperors. But being all formed of wood, they have diſappeared entirely, either from the effects of time, humidity, or fire. It is cuſtomary to have them ſurrounded with thick foreſts of cypreſſes, or thoſe firs called by Mr. Oſbeck *abies Sinenſis*, which are devoted to the flames by the people, whenever they become diſcontented with the reigning dynaſty. Beſides, when the robbers grow powerful, and ſpread themſelves over the cantons, where any imperial tombs are found, they pillage them ſo completely, that even the roofs are not left ſtanding. The hiſtory of China frequently mentions ſuch diſaſters, which cannot be avoided, becauſe the *Miao*, if formed in the midſt of towns, would ſoon transform them into burying-grounds. The princes, the governors, and the great mandarines,

rines, muſt have their places of ſepulture ſhaded with trees, planted in quincunx to a very great diſtance, and much ſoil fit for culture has been waſted, to gratify this obſtinacy.

An Egyptian law, preſerved by Plato, declares that no perſon ſhould be buried on any ſpot capable of producing a tree. We know to a certainty, that the Pharaohs, even to the dynaſty of the Saitæ, conformed themſelves to this wiſe regulation; for not even a ſhrub could be planted either in the environs of the pyramids, or around the royal ſepulchres of Thebes. But this is not the only circumſtance, in which the two nations differ with regard to their funeral ceremonies; for in general they are void of every kind of analogy.

However deſirous we may be of knowing the ſpecies of architecture, and taſte of ornaments, exhibited on the tombs of the Chineſe emperors, yet unfortunately no ſuch information is to be expected from the accounts of the Jeſuits. All they have written on that ſubject can be conſidered only as a collection of fictions; and to prove this, we ſhall, however unwillingly, inſert here the deſcription given by Father du Halde of the pretended tomb of *Schi-chuan-di*:

This prince, ſays he, *choſe for his ſepulchre the mount* Ly. *He cauſed it to be hollowed out, as one may ſay, even to the centre of the earth. Above, he erected a mauſolæum, which reſembled a mountain, five hundred feet high, and at leaſt half a league in circumference. In the middle was a rich coffin; and around*

it were lamps and flambeaux, kept burning with human fat. Within the tomb, on one ſide, appeared a vaſt lake of quickſilver, on which were ſeen many birds of gold and ſilver: while the other ſide exhibited a complete aſſortment of furniture and arms. Thouſands of precious jewels were ſtrewed here and there. It had coſt not only immenſe ſums of money, but likewiſe the lives of many perſons; for beſides the ſervants of the palace, who ſuffered death, upwards of ten thouſand workmen were buried there alive . . . . . All at once the people, who could no longer ſupport the yoke, flew to arms. Hang-ſi *demoliſhed the vaſt incloſures. The coffin ſtill remained; until a ſhepherd, it is ſaid, when looking for a ſtray ſheep in the midſt of the ruins, let fall ſome ſparks of fire which conſumed them altogether* *.

Such a deſcription does not deſerve to be ſeverely criticiſed, becauſe whoever reads it with the ſmalleſt reflection muſt be ſufficiently diſguſted. Thoſe lamps with human greaſe, and birds of gold ſwimming on mercury within a tomb, are ſuch childiſh prodigies, that our moſt wretched writers of romance would ſcarcely inſert them among fairy-tales. Father du Halde might ſurely have exaggerated, in a far more ingenious manner, concerning China.

Through this cloud of fables, however, we diſcover two certain facts: in the firſt place, the tomb muſt have been wood, from its being deſtroyed by fire; and we perceive likewiſe that unfortunate wretches were ſlaughtered on ſuch occaſions.

* Deſcription of China, vol. ii.

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The emperor *Schi-chuan-di* deſcended from a Chineſe family of *Tzin*, and hated the Tartars, with whom he was frequently at war. Thus, it could not be from them, that he had borrowed the cuſtom of immolating human victims; but he found it already eſtabliſhed in China, where it is continued at the preſent day. Even the Jeſuits authoriſe us to entertain great and melancholy ſuſpicions on that head, when they ſay that the emperor *Can-hi* made a law to prevent the practice of ſacrificing ſlaves at the deceaſe of princes of the blood; and yet, ſome time after, women were ſtrangled at the obſequies of *Tavang*, brother to the emperor *Can-hi*. This execution is ſo recent, that living witneſſes of the fact might now be found at Pekin. Conſidering the obſtinacy of the Chineſe in perſiſting to deſtroy their children with a brutal ferocity ſo well known, it is certainly not very aſtoniſhing to find them continuing to immolate human victims. Unenlightened as they are by philoſophy, it is as difficult for them to make any progreſs in morality, as in the arts and ſciences. At the funerals of private people, ſtatues of paper, repreſenting male and female ſervants, are always thrown into the fire; and we may preſume, that this ceremony was invented by poor people, who had no ſlaves to ſacrifice at their interments. Indeed we can eaſily conceive that few, except the emperors and princes, were in a ſituation to make ſuch coſtly offerings. Mr. le Gentil obſerves on this occaſion, in his *Voyage round the World*, that a great mixture of Indian cuſtoms is perceptible at the funerals of

the Chineſe. In fact their religion is a chaos of practices, adopted partly from the Indians, and ſtill more perhaps from the Scythians, who, according to Herodotus, always interred ſome ſlaves and concubines with the corpſe of their ſovereign. This is very conformable to the dreadful ſcenes exhibited under Can-hi at the obſequies of Ta-vang.

The paſſion of the Chineſe for the number nine muſt likewiſe be counted among the ſuperſtitions they have in common with the Tartars. Many ſteeples, or towers of nine ſtories, are ſeen throughout the whole country, merely from a whimſical inclination for this number. The ſame circumſtance gives riſe to the humiliating ceremony of bowing nine times, on approaching the throne of the emperors of China; and we learn from the hiſtory of *Gengis-Kan*, that it was likewiſe eſtabliſhed at the court of that prince *.

Among all the towers of nine ſtories in China, not one is built of porcelain, as ſome amplifiers have aſſerted in their relations. What gave riſe to this fable is a ſteeple in the neighbourhood of Nankin, in erecting which the Tartars employed bricks of a quality rather better than ordinary, and impreſſed with figures by means of moulds. Father du Halde, after giving a kind of deſcription of this building, which he embelliſhes as much as poſſible, by adopting the ſtyle of Father le Comte, finiſhes with theſe expreſſions: *This*, ſays he, *is what the Chineſe call the Porcelain Tower; although perhaps ſome of our*

* Petit de la Croix, Hiſt. de Gengis-kan.

Europeans

Europeans might affect to ſtyle it the Tower of Brick *. Thoſe, who give it that name, are ſurely far from being blameable; for not a ſingle piece of any thing like porcelain can be found in the whole edifice.

This tower is remarkable for a degree of ſolidity, very uncommon in the buildings of that country; and, in fact, it was not conſtructed by the Chineſe, but by *Koublai-Kan*, in commemoration of his conqueſt. On this account it has always been reſpected by the Mandhuis, while many others in the vicinity of *Nankin* were pillaged and deſtroyed, when that town was taken. Even the Tartars themſelves, although deſirous of preſerving more ſevere diſcipline, could not then reſtrain their victorious troops; who, as the Chineſe pretend, among other exceſſes levelled the royal ſepulchres and ſet fire to the ſacred groves. Anciently, indeed, prodigious tracts planted with cypreſſes, ſerved there as an incloſure to ſome wooden edifices. But it cannot be conſidered as a great misfortune, that ſuch foreſts, equally uſeleſs both to gods and men, ſhould be reduced to aſhes, that the ſoil, as is now really the caſe, might ſerve for tillage. Nieuhoff, who viſited Nankin ſoon after this event, found tranquillity already re-eſtabliſhed in that town. We muſt therefore conſider as fabulous what Father le Comte has related of the Tartars having carried all the Chineſe women to market in ſacks; where he pretends they were ſold, without diſtinction of age or rank, to the higheſt bidders. He even adds, that thoſe, who perceived any ſigns

* Deſcription of China, vol. ii.

of

of decrepitude on the unfortunate beings they had purchaſed in this manner, threw them without mercy into the river. This ſtory ſeems to be founded ſolely on the cuſtom of the Tartars, when they gain a battle, of cutting off the ears of the dead, and filling nine ſacks. We know how often they practiſed the ſame thing in Poland; as well as in Bohemia, at the defeat of the duke Henry, near Lignitz, in the year one thouſand two hundred and forty-two. Some corps of Eleuths and Calmucs having been vanquiſhed by the emperor of China in one thouſand ſix hundred and ninety-ſix, he ordered their long hair to be cut off, and collected likewiſe into nine ſacks.

The Brick-Tower of nine ſtories, concerning which we have already ſpoken, is garniſhed on the outſide, like many others, with rows of ſmall bells, and the noiſe they produce, when ſhaken by the wind, is very diſagreeable. Some have pretended that theſe chimes reſembled what was ſeen on an Etruſcan monument ſomewhere near *Cluſium*; and the Etruſcans, they add, were cloſely connected with the Egyptians, whoſe works they copied continually. But we ſhould obſerve, that Pliny gives us very plainly to underſtand, that the monument of Cluſium never exiſted. We are therefore at a loſs to know whether Varro amuſed himſelf with inventing this fable, or had really extracted what he relates from ſome obſcure romance *. The idea of any great

* Pliny appears to inſinuate that the deſcription of the monument of *Cluſium* was taken from that collection of fables which he calls *fabulæ Etruſcæ*.

inter-

intercourſe between the Egyptians and Etruſcans ſeems to be founded entirely on a paſſage of Strabo, badly interpreted, added to the opinion of ſome modern Italians. The Abbé Winckelman could not diſcover any reſemblance whatever in the monuments of thoſe two nations, who, according to all appearances, were as little connected as the Laplanders and the Spaniards.

The Chineſe, perſuaded that nothing in architecture can be more magnificent than their tower of nine ſtories, are conſtantly forming models of ſuch building about two feet high, and covered with mother of pearl. They endeavour to diſpoſe of ſuch baubles to European merchants, taking care to add a certain number of thoſe ſmall ſtatues, called idols by the miſſionaries, but known to us by the name of Chineſe figures. They are certainly intended to repreſent tutelary genii, and local divinities; for the numerous ſteeples, concerning which travellers have propoſed ſo many conjectures, can be nothing but pagodas. Thence the alarm is ſpread, in caſe of fire, and on theſe the hours are indicated by ſand-glaſſes, which are however far from being exact. Prior to the year one thouſand five hundred and ſixty, not one good ſun-dial could be found in all China: neither were any of the lettered there acquainted with the firſt principles of gnomonics, or capable, ſays Father Greſlon, of calculating a meridian ſhade.

With regard to the *Pai-leou*, generally believed to be triumphal arches, not one of them approaches what we call the New Gothic; and the greater part,

as

as Father le Comte acknowledges, do not deſerve conſideration *. Yet the paſſion of the Chineſe for thoſe buildings is very great; and the ſmalleſt towns waſte much timber in that way, which would be much better employed in conſtructing huts for thoſe miſerable Troglodytes, concerning whom we ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak hereafter. It is neceſſary to remark, that this was far from being the taſte of the Egyptians, who never had even a veſtige of any triumphal arch, until after the conqueſt of the Greeks, or rather of the Romans. What is ſeen in the environs of *Enſene*, or *Antinoopolis*, is a work of the emperor Adrian; and to me it appears to be nothing more than a portico.

Among the *Pai-leou* of China, none can be conſidered, either from their ſtructure or characters, as very ancient; and Father du Halde conſiders the inſcription on the brazen column, erected, according to him, about the year fifty of our era, as ſurpaſſing in antiquity all other monuments of the empire †. But that pillar, ſuppoſed to be ſeen on the frontiers of Tonquin, appears very ſuſpicious: no traveller can ſay any thing with certainty further than that the Tonquineſe have covered it, as we are told, with a heap of ſtones; and conſequently indeed not much is to be ſeen. Beſides, when we attend to that long ſucceſſion of ages mentioned by all the chronicles of China, it muſt be allowed, that an inſcription of one thouſand ſeven hundred years is very modern.

* New Memoirs on China, letter iii.

† Deſcription of China, vol. i.

No

No circumſtance has enabled us to form any judgment on ſome characters, ſaid to be found on the *Van-ly-czin*; but if they have not been added, when the wall received ſome repairs, we muſt conſider them as more ancient than the column of braſs.

Great ſimplicity prevails in the interior of the Chineſe houſes, as well as throughout the other deſpotic ſtates of Aſia; where the poverty of the people and continual diſtruſts prevent the acquiſition of much furniture. Riches are there buried in the earth, rather than expoſed to ſuch riſks; and the ſame utenſils are employed to various purpoſes. Yet neither in Turkey, nor Perſia, are ſuch miſerable families to be found as in China, where they are deſtitute of all the conveniencies of life. Excluſive of thoſe, who in the ſouthern provinces live entirely on fiſh, and remain conſtantly in their barks without clothes of any kind, many have nothing more than holes in the earth for their habitation. Thirty *lys* from *Ho-lou* after having paſſed *Tchang-nan*, ſays Father Fontaney, whole families of Chineſe are ſeen living in grottos; for China alſo, he adds, has its Troglodytes *. Not far beyond the town of *Ping-teng*, great numbers inhabit caverns ten or twelve feet broad and twenty long, one of which frequently contains ſeveral families.

It is credible that theſe Troglodytes, rendered at times deſperate by this miſery, aſſociate with the robbers and certain bands of men who wander with ſome few flocks in the interior provinces, where no

* Journal of Travels from *Pekin* to *Kiang-tcheou*.

ſigns

ſigns appear of agriculture. Their mode of living may be rendered more evident by the example of thoſe Nomades in Spain, who wander with their cattle from Lerida in Catalonia to the very plains of Andaluſia, without finding the ſmalleſt obſtruction in all that prodigious diſtance. It is eaſy to conceive, that, in a well-cultivated country, this could not be permitted, and that ſuch flocks muſt feed only on deſerted fields or barren lands, where no perſon is intereſted to have the limits aſcertained. In the vaſt ſolitudes of China, and even in thoſe of Tartary, the monks of ſome temples and bonzeries have formed commodious dwellings, and admirable gardens watered by rivulets, which are conducted from the mountains in artificial caſcades. Theſe hermits, who are nothing better than thoſe of Europe, could not ſleep one night at their eaſe, if the banditti of China were leſs religious: but they reſpect the pagodas, or pillage them only in the greateſt extremity. It is beſides poſſible, that the holy men, who inhabit them, being in correſpondence with the robbers, aſſiſt in concealing their plunder. In this likewiſe a reſemblance is found with the monaſteries in the deſerts of Spain and Portugal; and we may therefore pronounce woe to that country, which contains wandering ſhepherds and hermits.

Near the principal towns of China, ſome villages here and there have houſes covered with tiles. On advancing into the centre of the country, the beſt buildings are wretched cottages of mud, thatched with ruſhes, and in many towns of the ſecond rank

clay

clay alone is uſed for the walls of the dwellings. As the Chineſe have never ſucceeded in glaſs-work, nothing of the kind is ſeen even in the windows of their palaces. The ſaloon, where the emperor *Canhi* gave audience to the Ruſſian ambaſſador, ſays Brandt, had wretched preparations of paper to admit the light *; becauſe the glaſs-houſes eſtabliſhed by that prince were then, and are ſtill, incapable of producing any thing to anſwer that purpoſe. In ſome provinces waxed ſilks, ſhells, and mother-of-pearl, are uſed for windows. This likewiſe is the caſe in the cathedral of *Goa:* but ſuch ſubſtances admit very little light, becauſe they are leſs tranſparent than horn, or the ſpecular ſtone of the ancients, of which ſome fragments are preſerved in the churches of Italy.

It is curious enough to ſee the Chineſe forming artificial rocks in what they call gardens; and then aſking Europeans, if their artiſts could produce any thing ſo magnificent. They might be anſwered, that to heap up ſtones at random requires neither genius, art, induſtry, taſte, nor any notion of the beautiful and uſeful. They would therefore act more wiſely by ſowing ſuch ſpots with rice or wheat, to render famine leſs fatal in China. We are aſſured

* Beſchreibung einer groſſen Chineſiſchen Reiſe.—Brandt ſays likewiſe that this ſaloon had no ceiling of any kind, ſo that the roof was ſeen in the apartment, as in moſt of the Chineſe buildings, of which a tent has evidently been the model. The pillars, it ſhould be remarked, are not always round, but frequently cut into five and ſeven faces.

that the empire contains two thouſand mountains; and nothing can be more fooliſh than to augment the number, inſtead of endeavouring to render the country more level. Every perſon knows, without our dwelling on the circumſtance here, that neither the Chineſe quarter, nor that of the Tartars in Pekin, contains any temples or public edifices ſuperior in ſtructure or magnificence to thoſe of the other towns. The emperor, who alone has the privilege of offering ſolemn ſacrifices to the genii of the ſky, the earth, the mountains, rivers, and valleys, never perform the ceremony but under tents. This cuſtom, which ſhould be conſidered as very ancient, is likewiſe conformable to what we have ſaid concerning the primitive ſtate of the Chineſe, when they were wont to encamp like the Tartars. The tents employed for theſe ſacrifices, are pitched during the days of the ſolemnity in the *Tien-tang*, and the *Ti-tang*; and they are afterwards preſerved with the ſacred vaſes and tablets. Two particular houſes are deſtined to receive them: the one, conſecrated to the genius of the ſky, is round; and the other, ſacred to the genius of the earth, is ſquare, according to the admirable coſmography of *Han-li*, and the profound knowledge of the lettered in China. They all agreed that our world is a cube, and not a globe; and the architects were obliged of courſe to comply in the beſt manner they could with the deciſion. Mr. Chambers, who did not attend to theſe circumſtances, is greatly deceived, when he compares the Chineſe pavilions to the monopteral temples of the ancients.

ancients. By ſuch extravagant inferences, all the parts of Grecian architecture might be diſcovered in the palace of Pekin, as it is deſcribed by Iſbrant Ides. Beſides, Mr. Chambers does not ſeem to have been informed of a fact relating to the pagodas of *Fo*, ſeen in China: we are aſſured by a traveller, that their plan and interior diſpoſition reſemble almoſt in every point thoſe of the pagodas of Hindooſtan. Thus it is ſcarcely to be doubted, that this mode of building was unknown to the Chineſe, prior to the introduction of the worſhip of *Fo*, the epoch of which is leſs ancient than our preſent era. Even admitting that *Lao-kium* had made a journey to India, as might well have happened, it is certain that he did not eſtabliſh the true religion of that country in China.

The ſtate of architecture among the Egyptians is an immenſe ſubject; but we ſhall endeavour to include in a few pages what ſeems moſt intereſting. Thoſe people were always building: one great work produced another ſtill more prodigious; and if fortune had preſerved them from the yoke of the Perſians and of the Greeks, they would have endeavoured to level the mountains of Thebais, rather than remain idle. All their obeliſks are ſo much alike, that when they have no characters, it is very difficult to diſtinguiſh them one from another. It ſeems ſtrange, that they did not grow weary of rearing ſuch monuments; and yet among their laſt kings we find Amaſis and Nectanebus, continuing thoſe laborious undertakings with as much ardor, as any of their numerous predeceſſors

Mr. Le Roy muſt be deceived, when he pretends, that the ruſtic ſhed had been adopted by the Egyptians, in the ſame manner that Vitruvius ſays it ſerved among the Greeks, as a model for the moſt ſuperb edifices on earth *. Every thing tends to prove that the Egyptians, prior to their being united as a nation, lived like Troglodytes in the caverns of Ethiopia. Thus a grotto, rather than a cottage, muſt have afforded the firſt notions of their architecture. The ſavages of Greece, on the contrary, from the diverſity of ſoil and climate, which in ſuch caſes has a great influence, were under the neceſſity of erecting huts. No reſemblance therefore ever exiſted between the roofs of the Grecian temples and thoſe of the Egyptians; and as the latter were entirely flat, they could not have been copied after the *ruſtic ſhed* of Vitruvius.

Pharaoh Amaſis cauſed a huge piece of hollow rock to be brought from the vicinity of Elephantis, and placed it before the portico of the temple of Minerva in the town of Sais. The Greeks, who compoſed words at will, called the interior of this ſtone a *monolithe chamber*; and the firſt idea of ſuch an apartment muſt evidently have been taken from a grotto.

When we reflect on the prodigious excavations, made continually by the Egyptians in their mountains, and the ſingular predilection of the prieſts for thoſe caverns, where they paſſed the greater part of their lives, it is no longer doubtful, that, in former times, they had lived like Troglodytes. Thence are

* Ruins of the nobleſt Monuments of Greece, vol. i.

derived

derived likewiſe all the characteriſtics of their edifices: ſome ſeem to be factitious rocks, where the walls exceed twenty-four feet in thickneſs; and pillars of more than thirty feet in circumference are not at all uncommon. If any thing can be compared to what theſe extraordinary people erected on the ſurface of the earth, it muſt be their ſubterraneous labors. Some ancient authors had good information, that different apartments were conſtructed an hundred and ſixty feet below the pyramids, communicating with each other by paſſages, to which Ammianus Marcellinus has given the Greek name of *ſyringes* *. The only one of theſe now known is that leading through the moſt northern of all the pyramids; and it becomes every year more imperfect, from the rolling in of ſand and ruins. Yet Proſper Alpin aſſures us, that, about the year one thouſand five hundred and eighty-five, a man, having deſcended there with a compaſs, arrived at the place where the way divides into two ramifications, one taking a ſouthern, and the other an eaſtern direction. This could no longer be traced by Maillet, Greves, Thevenot, Vanſleb, and Father Sicard, who came many years later; and as to Belo, his negligence in deſcribing this monument is ſuch, that what he relates does not deſerve a peruſal †.

Herodotus knew beyond a doubt that, after deſcending below ground, a perſon could paſs into the

* Lib. xxii.

† In the 228th page of his *Obſervations* he makes the ſhell of the great pyramid twice as long as it really is.

apartments of the pyramid of the labyrinth. As this is exactly the case in that of Memphis, the interior disposition of which is perfectly well known at the present day, we have every reason to believe, that the same mode of construction was common to the other monuments of that kind. They all must have had subterraneous vaults, and secret passages, like that discovered in the thirtieth degree of latitude, which ever since the time of Pliny has been improperly taken for a pit. Yet no water could possibly enter there, any more than into the catacombs of *Sakara*, where the ground is still less elevated; for all these excavations are formed in calcareous substances, where no humidity can remain. Strabo has indicated a *Serapeum*, or chapel of Serapis, amidst the moving sands to the west of Memphis, which appears to have been the real spot where the mouths of the different galleries, leading below the pyramids of *Gizeh*, were united.

Among the crypts and grottos of Heptanomis and Thebais, those of *Alyi* and *Hipponon* are large enough to contain a thousand horses: we know those of *Speos Artemidos*, of *Hieracon*, *Selinon*, *Antæopolis*, and *Silsili*; as well as the syringes, or subterraneous passages mentioned by Pausanias, in the vicinity of the vocal statue *. But although travellers meet with others every day, they have not yet discovered the one hundredth part of such excavations. We cannot however admit entirely the tradition, credited in ancient times, which reported that the whole town of Thebes

* Lib. i. in Attic. cap. 42.

was

was ſituated over crypts, and that their ramifications extended under the bed of the Nile *. What might have given credit to this is the circumſtance of certain grottos being really ſeen on the banks of the river, between *Korna* and *Habou*, where it is ſaid the firſt kings of Egypt were wont to lodge, prior to the building of Thebes.

To the north-weſt of *Korna* are thoſe excavations, called by the Arabs *Biban-el-Moluk*. Concerning the purpoſe to which they were deſtined no doubt was ever entertained either by the ancients or the moderns. They are in fact the tombs of the firſt dynaſties, or royal families; and thoſe, who place the bodies of the ancient Pharaohs in the pyramids, are egregiouſly miſtaken. At Biban-el-Moluk not one ſingle ſtone has the leaſt of a pyramidical figure; and this confirms us in the opinion, that none of the chambers in the pyramids of *Memphis* ever contained any mummies: but they were placed many feet below the foundation of thoſe edifices, the form of which, in the Egyptian worſhip, had no reſemblance to that of the tombs.

Some of the grottos we have mentioned contained embalmed bodies, and they were generally kept in an upright poſture, as occupying leaſt ſpace. That rule ſeems indeed to have been always obſerved, except with the kings, who lay at full length in the ſarcophagi. We muſt not give entire credit, as ſome have done, to a paſſage of Silius Italicus; which beſides does not concern the attitude of the mummies

* Plin. Hiſt. Nat. lib. xxxvi. cap. 14.

in the cells, but the manner of placing them in the houſes. This bad poet wiſhes to inſinuate, without any appearance of truth, that the Egyptians aſſembled their dead around the tables of the living *.

Egypt had likewiſe caverns, which were never uſed as ſepulchres: ſuch was that of Diana, or the *Speos Artemidos*, ſtill ſeen at *Beni-Haſan*; and the figures, ſculptured there, have certainly not been executed by the Greeks. Many others of the ſame kind were cut in the rocks of Ethiopia †; where, we learn from Bermudez, the prieſts initiated, or offered ſacrifices, and even retired to ſtudy ‡. We have been told of a certain Pancrates, who did not leave thoſe dreary abodes during a period of twenty-four years; and it is generally ſuppoſed, that Orpheus, Eumolpus, and Pythagoras, were admitted there likewiſe.

On conſidering this mode of ſtudying under ground, it no longer appears aſtoniſhing, that the prieſts contracted the habit of throwing a myſterious veil over all their real or imaginary knowledge. Thus, in many circumſtances, it is as difficult to determine the extent of their erudition, as that of their

* ——— *Ægyptia tellus.*
Condit odorato poſt funus ſtantia buſto
Corpora; & à menſis exſanguem haud ſeparat umbram. Lib. xiii.

† Alvarez, Rerum Æthiopicar.

‡ *Prophetæ Ægyptiorum non permittunt ut metalli artifices, ſculptoreſque Deos repreſentent, ne a recepta abeant forma; ſed illudunt vulgo, dum in templorum atriis accipitrum ibidumque roſtra ſculpi curant, ſubeuntes interea ſacra ſubterranea quæ profundis illorum myſteriis velamento ſunt.* SYNESIUS.

ignorance;

ignorance; and therefore ſuch oppoſite judgments have been formed concerning their philoſophy, which ſome confine to a very ſmall ſcale, while others conſider it as almoſt boundleſs: but it is truly intereſting to obſerve, that the cuſtom of retiring into cells, practiſed by the prieſts, gave riſe to the myſteries of antiquity. Without this, none perhaps would ever have been invented; and whereſoever thoſe of Egypt were received, the mode of celebrating them in caverns was likewiſe adopted, until the inſtitution became at length eſſentially changed. Biſhop Warburton led all Europe into errors, concerning the pretended ſecret revealed to the perſons initiated in Egypt, becauſe he conſidered the letter, ſaid to be written by Alexander to his mother, as authentic. In fact it was the invention of ſome Chriſtian; and a groſſer fraud was never practiſed. Mr. Silhouette, who tranſlated theſe fragments of Warburton, ſhould have perceived the ridiculouſneſs of placing in Egypt a high-prieſt called *Leon*. Never before the conqueſt of Alexander did any Egyptian prieſt bear that name; and it would not be more abſurd to pretend that an emperor of China was called Charles Martel *. Much more might be ſaid here, concerning the ſuppoſed letter, were it not now allowed to be apocryphal by all the learned of Europe. Beſides, how could the initiated be told, that the gods of Egypt had been mortals, when it is known that the

* Mr. Silhouette cites this letter of Alexander to refute the Abbé Pluche, who believed the myſteries were relative to agriculture.

Egyptians,

Egyptians, ſo far from ever adoring deified men, held that kind of worſhip in the greateſt abhorrence?

The myſteries ſeem to have been originally a ſecret inſtruction, given only to the prieſts, who, prior to their conſecration, experienced a panic terror. They were afterwards conducted by dark windings to a place very full of light; and this ſuggeſted the idea of copying the phenomena of thunder and lightning, as we have already mentioned in the firſt volume of theſe reſearches. All the prieſts of Egypt without exception were to be initiated, as Diodorus ſays, in what were called the myſteries of the god Pan; and not one of them eſcaped a panic terror in the obſcurity of the ſubterraneous paſſages *.

This taſte for myſteries and enigmas was introduced among the common people, and produced no inconſiderable effect on their character. It cannot be denied, that the deputies of the provinces, or Nomes, might at times in their aſſemblies have treated of ſuch important matters as required the greateſt ſecrecy: but we muſt allow that none, but the Egyptians, would ever have thought of aſſembling their national repreſentatives in a labyrinth, to which they were conducted by the moſt ob-

* It does not appear that the Egyptians ever revealed the great myſteries to any who did not belong to the ſacerdotal claſs; except perhaps to Pythagoras. In time, every perſon who was not guilty of ſome public crime could obtain admiſſion to the leſſer myſteries. Thoſe vagabonds called Egyptian prieſts in Greece and Italy required conſiderable ſums for initiations; and the gypſies practiſe ſimilar mummeries to obtain money.

ſcure

ſcure windings, as Pliny atteſts in poſitive terms *.

The Chineſe have no word in their language to expreſs a labyrinth; becauſe nothing approaches that form among all the edifices of their country. It may be boldly aſſerted, that they are incapable at this day of conceiving any idea of ſuch a building, either from plan or deſcription. Even the learned of Europe cannot flatter themſelves with having formed very accurate notions concerning the labyrinth; for although many of its ruins ſtill remain, yet travellers in general miſs the ſpot, moſt probably by directing their reſearches too far towards the weſt. Paul Lucas, who could not write, and his compiler Fourmont, may eaſily be excuſed for miſtaking the ruins of the caſtle of Caron for fragments of that fabric; but it is unpardonable in Father Sicard, and Mr. Pococke, to fall into the ſame error. This pretended caſtle of Caron, according to different plans, ſeems to have been a chapel of Serapis, ſcarcely one hundred feet in length, without any appearance either of a pyramid, or labyrinth: while Strabo aſſures us, that thoſe perſons, who viſited the terrace of the labyrinth, ſaw around them a whole country covered with hewn ſtones; and the view was terminated by an edifice of a pyramidical form.

Thus we perceive how many difficulties are encountered by thoſe, who ſtudy the monuments of a country, concerning which the moderns have con-

* *Majorem autem in parte tranſitus eſt per tenebras.* Lib. xxxvi. cap. 13.

ſpired

ſpired with the ancients to give us falſe ideas. The latter indeed were probably deceived by being at the diſcretion of a ſet of men called Interpreters, whoſe college was eſtabliſhed in the reign of Pſammeticus; and who might be compared to thoſe people called Ciceroni at Rome. Philoſophers, who were really deſirous of acquiring information in Egypt, found it abſolutely neceſſary to remain there during many years, as we find by the example of Pythagoras, Eudoxius, and Plato. But travellers, who only went and returned, like Herodotus, without knowing a word of the language of the country, could learn nothing but from the interpreters. Thoſe men perceiving the inclination of the Greeks for the marvellous, amuſed them like children with ſtories inconſiſtent with common ſenſe, and unworthy of the majeſty of hiſtory. They probably invented the tradition adopted at this day, which ſays that the pyramids were erected contrary to the advice of the prieſts, who proteſted in vain againſt ſuch undertakings. Yet we ſee very plainly, that they were conſtructed particularly under the direction of the ſacerdotal claſs; by whoſe aid they received an exact poſition, either by means of the ſhade of a ſtyle, or from obſervations made on ſome ſtar when paſſing the meridian. Their real object in this was never revealed even to Thales, concerning whom Pliny and Plutarch relate one very great falſehood: they pretend that he taught the Egyptians to meaſure the height of the pyramids by the ſhadow, which could never be done

done in the manner they deſcribe *. Thales, on arriving from Miletus at Heliopolis, was as ignorant as poſſible, and knew nothing of either mathematics or aſtronomy; and the little knowledge he acquired afterwards was entirely due to the prieſts of Egypt, whoſe ſcholar he had been for many years. Such a perſon cannot be ſuppoſed to have taught his maſters; and we muſt conclude for his honor, that no report of the kind originated with him; otherwiſe his ingratitude would be unpardonable.

Thoſe people have ſpoken without reflection, who pretend that the pyramids received a particular poſition, in order to obtain an unchangeable meridian, by which obſervations might be made to determine whether or not the poles are ſubject to variation. In that caſe, one pyramid would have been ſufficient, inſtead of rearing ſo many along the whole coaſt of Libya, from Memphis to the labyrinth. Neither is it true, that they ever ſerved as gnomons, whatever may have been ſaid to that effect by modern writers: the ancients took care never to aſſert any thing of the kind; perhaps from having already had ſome notion of the conſumption of ſhade. Solnus, Ammianus Marcellinus, and Caſſiodorius, expreſs themſelves indeed in a very improper manner on this point; and all we can conclude from their argu-

* To obtain the height of a pyramid by its ſhadow it is neceſſary to meaſure one ſide of the baſe and know the middle. As Pliny and Plutarch do not repreſent Thales as beginning by this operation, we muſt conſider what they relate concerning this matter as fabulous.

ments

ments amounts to nothing more than that the pyramids never caſt the ſmalleſt ſhade at any time of the year or day. This, ſays Marcellinus, proceeded from the mechaniſm of their conſtruction, *mechanicâ ratione*; but every perſon muſt perceive, that his mode of reaſoning is directly oppoſite to the laws of nature *.

We ſhall here endeavour, in a few words, to explain this matter. The largeſt of the pyramids, ſituated in twenty-nine degrees fifty minutes and ſome ſeconds north latitude, begins towards the vernal equinox to afford no ſhadow at mid-day beyond its baſe; and thoſe, who then walk round this huge maſs of ſtones upwards of five hundred feet high, never loſe ſight of the ſun. The architects muſt have foreſeen this effect, proceeding from the pyramidal form of the edifice; and the meridian ſhade during one half of the year is confined to the northern face, without ever reaching the earth. Thus nothing more imperfect, as a ſun-dial, could be invented than the great pyramid, by which even the period of the ſummer ſolſtice cannot be aſcertained; becauſe the ſhadow is then too high to be diſtinctly perceived. Yet the celebrated chronologiſt Vignoles ſuppoſes that the prieſts calculated the equi-

* Solnus, Polyhiſt. cap. 42.—Am. Marcel. Hiſt. lib. 22.—Caſſidor. Variarum, lib. 7. As Solnus appears to have been the firſt propagator of this error, we ſhall quote his own expreſſions: *Pyramides turres ſunt in Ægypto faſtigiatæ ultra celſitudinem omnem, quæ fieri manu poſſit, itaque menſuram umbrarum egreſſæ, nullas habent umbras.*

noxes

noxes by means of the pyramids *; but he would never have formed this opinion, had his plans of thoſe monuments been as exact, and his maps of Egypt as good, as thoſe now publiſhed.

It ſhould be remarked, that the Egyptians obſerved no determined proportion between the breadth of the baſe, and the height of the pyramids. As their dimenſions varied ſo conſiderably, no idea could be had of having recourſe to them, in order to find out the equinoctial days; which, according to Macrobius, were indicated by ſimple ſtyles, or, as others pretend, by water-clocks. One fact was entirely unknown to Vignoles: the pyramid, called *el Harem el Kieber el Koubli* by the Arabs, has a baſe much broader, in proportion to its height, than the great pyramid of *Memphis*. Thus beginning much ſooner than the other to caſt no ſhade at mid-day, it cannot ſerve in any manner to indicate the equinoxes. Beſides, it may be appoſite to aſk, what means were employed by the prieſts of Thebes, who had no pyramid in all their country, whatever Abulfeda has aſſerted to the contrary; and yet their college was the

* De Annis Ægyptiac. in Miſcell. Berolin. tom. iv. It is merely an effect of chance that the great pyramid begins towards the equinox to conſume its ſhadow at noon; for in ſome of the others this phenomenon is obſervable ſooner. We can ſay with certainty that the greateſt meridian ſhade of the pyramid of *Gizeh* and all the reſt indicates the winter ſolſtice: but it muſt have been very difficult to aſcertain that of the ſummer; and beſides, all ſuch obſervations were rendered inaccurate by the penumbra.

firſt in Egypt, as well for aſtronomical knowledge, as in point of antiquity.

We muſt not therefore attribute views to the Egyptians, which they could not have entertained without diſcovering a total want of common ſenſe. For ſurely a ſimple dial-pin is better adapted to afford exact indications in ſuch matters, than any maſs, where the ſhade muſt be ſo greatly impaired.

The pyramids, as well as the obeliſks, were monuments erected in honor of the Being who enlightens the univerſe; and this determined the prieſts to give them a particular poſition. Sepulchral cells might have been conſtructed within theſe edifices, ſufficient to contain the bodies of all the royal family. Yet only two apartments are hitherto diſcovered, and one ſingle cheſt, which, in oppoſition to the opinion of Strabo, many enlightened travellers, ſuch as Doctor Shaw, do not conceive to be a ſarcophagus, where any carcaſe was ever depoſited; and, in reality, the thing is very improbable. Endleſs conjectures have been hazarded; but hitherto no writer has reflected, that this cheſt might be what the Egyptians called the *Tomb of Oſiris*. Many ſuch were found throughout the whole country; and the ſuperſtition, attached to their conſtruction, conſiſted in making the rays of the ſun deſcend around them, without cauſing any ſhade on the ground at mid-day, during at leaſt one half of the year. This phenomenon continued longeſt in the ſouthern pyramids of *Illahon* and *Hauara*, towards the extremity of the plain called *Cochome*; and from their ruinous ſtate,

they

they may be conſidered as more ancient than thoſe of Memphis. The latter are thought ſtill capable of reſiſting the lapſe of five thouſand years, according to a calculation formed on the progreſs of their decay ſince the days of Herodotus. That hiſtorian mentions many figures and characters on the exterior of thoſe edifices, now no longer viſible; but Mr. Norden ſpoke without reflection, when he aſſerted, in his Journey through Nubia, that they were conſtructed prior to the invention of hieroglyphics. Such miſtakes ſhock all notions of hiſtory; and it were to be deſired, that the greater part of travellers, before their departure, or at leaſt after their return, would take ſome pains to improve their ſtudies.

The prieſts of ancient Egypt, by determining ſo very accurately the poſition of the pyramids, have enabled us to aſcertain, that no variation has taken place in the direction of the poles. In vain ſhould we look on the whole ſurface of our globe for any other means of obtaining this information. Had Chaldæa ever poſſeſſed edifices equally ſolid with thoſe of Egypt, ſome prodigious ruins would ſtill be found there: but from being formed of brick and bitumen, all the higher parts ſoon fell aſunder; and ſome remains are diſcovered only at a few feet above the foundation, where the tenacity of the bitumen has been preſerved by the humidity. This is moſt remarkable in a place ſuppoſed to be the ſite of a temple of *Belus*; but ſuch matters do not deſerve inveſtigation. Beſides, in no country do we find Chaldæan ſtatues, or monuments; while all the cabinets

of Europe are furniſhed with Egyptian antiquities. We may conſider as the greateſt exaggeration what Cteſias and Diodorus Siculus relate of an obeliſk, attributed by them to Semiramis, of which no perſon however could ſpeak from his own knowledge *. Egypt, on the contrary, muſt have exhibited more than eighty of the largeſt ſize. The operation of erecting them was not very difficult among people, who, from having tranſported many ſuch maſſes, had acquired an experience, which Fontana wanted, when he employed ſix hundred men, and one hundred and forty horſes, upon that of the Vatican. The power of the cables and capſtans being known, it is calculated, that this force would have been ſufficient to raiſe ten thouſand pound weight more than was neceſſary on that occaſion †. As the Egyptians did not place their obeliſks on ſuch elevated pedeſtals as thoſe ſo improperly employed at Rome, they might, with four hundred men and eighty horſes, have managed any monument of that kind, even with capſtans alone. The ſtory, told by ſome authors, concerning one of the Pharaohs, who, they ſay, tied his ſon to the top of one of theſe ſtones to make the workmen more cautious, is too notoriouſly abſurd to require refutation. By examining attentively the form and poſition of the obeliſks of Egypt, it is eaſy to perceive, that they could never be intended as gnomons, according to the opinion ſo pre-

* Jackſon, in his *Chronological Antiquities*, proves that no ſuch obeliſk ever exiſted at Babylon.

† Epiſtola de Obeliſco Romæ.

valent in Europe. Two were placed at the entrance of the temples; and when thoſe buildings could be approached by different ways, the number of ſuch ſpires was augmented in proportion. This is evident at the preſent day, in the ruins of the temple of Phylæ; in that of Thebes; and at the ſuppoſed tomb of Oſymandyas; a word evidently compoſed of *Mendes* and *Oſiris*.

Thus we find, that nothing like gnomons was the object; otherwiſe the abſurdity is evident of placing them ſo near each other, that their ſhadows muſt frequently be confounded together. Beſides, the upper part, called the *pyramidium*, could not give any preciſe indication without the addition of a globe, like that employed at Rome under Auguſtus and Conſtantius. Nothing of the kind however is mentioned by any ancient author, as having been practiſed by the Egyptians; and we ſee, by the paintings taken from the ruins of *Herculaneum*, and ſtill better by the Paleſtrina Moſaic, that the obeliſks are invariably repreſented without a globe, or any place to inſert a ſtyle, or bar. When a Roman, named Maximus, was prefect of Egypt, he cut away the point, in order to place a globe on the obeliſk of Alexandria; and this muſt have appeared to the Egyptians as ſacrilege. Thus the members of the Academy of Inſcriptions at Paris were very ill informed, when they made their report to the Academy of Sciences, relative to the antiquity of ſupporting globes with obeliſks *: for ſuch was never the practice of the Egyptians.

* Memoirs of the Academy of Inſcriptions, vol. iii.

Apion, the grammarian, indeed pretends, that Moſes placed concave hemiſpheres on pillars, inſtead of obeliſks; but he ſpeaks like a perſon altogether ignorant of the matter; and Joſephus, who was a ſtill worſe reaſoner, and more ignorant in natural philoſophy, refutes him by the moſt pitiful arguments. Vitruvius, Cleomedes, Macrobius, and Martianus Capella, deſcribe the ſolar time-keepers, uſed in Egypt, by which Eratoſthenes meaſured, or verified the meaſure of the earth *. According to them, they were really concave hemiſpheres, with a ſtyle raiſed perpendicularly in the middle; but it is truly ridiculous to juſtify Apion, by ſuppoſing that they could be placed on the top of obeliſks, or high pillars, where no perſon, without the aid of a ladder, could obſerve the declination of the ſhadow. Although the prieſts frequently had recourſe to theſe inſtruments, they eſteemed ſtill more their hydroſcopes or water-clocks, becauſe they could employ them during the night in aſtronomical obſervations. Yet it is difficult to believe Orus Apollo, when he ſays that they emptied themſelves preciſely in an equinoctial day †.

We have never had an opportunity of ſeeing either the ſand-glaſſes, or clepſydras, made in China; but yet we know that they do not repreſent a monkey diſcharging urine. The prieſts of Egypt thought proper to give that whimſical form to their water-

* Vitruv. Architect. lib. ix.—Cleomed. de Meteorolog.—Macrob. in Som. Scip. lib. i.—Mart. Capell. de Geometria.

† Hieroglyph. lib. i.

clocks;

clocks; which, beſides, were graduated and divided in another manner than thoſe of China. Twelve Egyptian hours are only equal to ſix with the Chineſe *; and this is of more conſequence than we are led to believe at firſt view; for in fact it is not leſs eſſential than the different modes of dividing the ſigns of the zodiac in theſe two countries, where no reſemblance can be found beyond what might well have proceeded from chance.

This is not the proper place to examine, what ſhould reaſonably be thought of the inſcriptions on the obeliſks. Father Kircher has made every effort to perſuade us, that they contain neither hiſtorical facts, nor narratives of any kind; but he did not know that theſe characters are totally unconnected with what properly conſtitutes an obeliſk. No leſs than three of the largeſt ſize are known to have been *pure*, that is to ſay without any appearance of engraving on the four faces, although they were certainly placed during many ages at the entrance of the temple of the Sun. Yet we cannot accuſe the prieſts and ſculptors of ignorance in hieroglyphics, as Hardouin ridiculouſly inſinuates, when ſpeaking of one of thoſe dumb ſpires, erected by Nectanebus †.

Abenephi, the Arab, and many others, who are not his countrymen, have confounded the obeliſks with the pretended hermetic columns. To prevent further confuſion, it is neceſſary that we ſhould intro-

* Bayer de Horis Sinicis.—Ulug Beig de Epochis celebr.

† Plin. lib. xxxvi. cap. 14.

duce accurate ideas and fixed terms in what relates to theſe two kinds of monuments, ſo totally unconnected *.

Manetho, in compoſing his hiſtory of Egypt, conſulted the *Stelæ of Hermes*, preſerved in the ſyringes, or ſubterraneous paſſages †; but we do not find that he had ever recourſe to the inſcriptions on the obeliſks. The word *Stela*, or Hermetic Column, muſt not however be taken in a literal ſenſe; for that kind of monument was at beſt only a cippus, and more frequently a mere tablet of ſtone. The Arabian alchymiſts were well informed of this, when they called the flat emerald, mentioned in the preceding ſection, the ſmaragdine table, as others have been called the tables of the decalogue.

Ancient writers in general confirm what Manetho ſays of the hermetic *Stelæ* being preſerved in the moſt ſecret part of the temples, ſuch as the *adytum*, and in the cells where the prieſts retired to ſtudy ‡. By this we find how different they muſt have been from the obeliſks, which were expoſed to public view at the entrance of the principal edifices. On monuments, ſo generally ſeen, and ſo ſignificant from their figure, engraved characters were not eſſential, but the inſcriptions alone conſtituted the hermetic *Stelæ*.

Mr. Jablonſki, whoſe authority muſt ever have great weight in all ſuch matters, has proved by in-

* Abenephi, apud Kirch. in Obeliſco Pamphilio.

† Syncel. in Chron. ‡ Apoteleſmat. lib. v.

vincible

vincible arguments, that the *Thoth*, *Mercurius Triſmegiſtus*, and *Hermes* of the Egyptians, is a mere mythological ſpectre, and not any perſon who really ever exiſted *. Yet the diſtinction he makes, between the ancient and modern Hermes, is not altogether perfect. The time of the firſt Hermes ſhould be conſidered, properly ſpeaking, to continue as long as the prieſts confined themſelves to engraving their hieroglyphics on ſtone; and the era of the ſecond began when they employed books of *papyrus*; becauſe with them even to touch parchment was unlawful. As thoſe men always ſpoke allegorically, they have led our modern chronologiſts into innumerable errors. It is with a ſmile mixed with compaſſion that we read the controverſies of theſe pretended calculators, concerning the real period when Hermes lived: they might as well diſpute about the reign of king Oberon.

Pliny may be conſidered as under a miſtake, when he pretends that the obeliſk ſeen in Heliopolis, at more than one hundred and ſixty leagues from the place where it was hewn, muſt be the moſt ancient. He fell into this error, becauſe the Greeks ſometimes employed the word Heliopolis to denote the town of Thebes; where, apparently, the firſt obeliſks had been placed before the temple of Jupiter Ammon, to adorn the capital of Egypt. Some modern geographers have followed very uncertain indications, in fixing the extent of that town; and Mr. D'Anville, who ſuppoſed its circuit to have been nine leagues,

* Pantheon Ægypt. lib. v.

has exceeded all bounds of probability. The Jeſuits, who are known to have exaggerated greatly every thing belonging to China, give Pekin ſix leagues in circumference; and it would be reduced to two, if the houſes were of three ſtories, inſtead of being wretched ground-floors, which require more ſurface than the regular buildings of Europe. Yet four hours are ſufficient for riding conveniently on horſe-back round this kind of Chineſe camp, which a ſpark of fire may reduce in one day to aſhes, without leaving even a ruin; while Buſcowich ſuſpects, that, after the deſtruction of Conſtantinople, ſome fragments at leaſt might remain of its moſques and *beſeſteins* *.

The houſes of Thebes, according to Diodorus, were of four or five ſtories; and, in that caſe, a circumference of nine leagues would ſuppoſe a greater heap of houſes than ever was ſeen upon earth, without even excepting Babylon, where apparently many dwellings had but one floor. By making a diſtinction between the town of Thebes, and the villages ſcattered along the banks of the Nile, every thing marvellous will diſappear. Dydimus, who muſt have had ſome knowledge of an actual ſurvey of that place, calculates the whole ſurface at only three thouſand ſeven hundred arouræ; and thus we find a town much leſs than Paris. The conſtant contradictions and variations of the ancients, concerning Thebes, prove the uncertainty of its limits; but, pro-

* Journal of Travels from Conſtantinople to Poland.

perly

perly ſpeaking, the buildings on the Libyan ſide did not belong to that city *.

Memphis was computed to be three leagues in circumference. This eſtimate muſt have included the great ponds, now entirely filled up, the park, or accaſia, ſycamore, and palm-trees planted in cluſters, and all the royal manſion of the Pharaohs. It is known that the palace extended from one extremity of the town to the other; becauſe moſt probably the ſeraglio, chapels, ſtables, and other out-houſes, adjoined the principal dwelling. Memphis, however, augmented only in proportion as Thebes declined. The ſtate of population in Egypt did not allow theſe two cities to flouriſh at the ſame time; and when Mr. Origny aſſerts, that twenty thouſand towns would not have injured the cultivated lands of that country †, we can only ſay, that this reſembles his other dreams concerning the iſle of Elephantis. Its extent, according to him, was prodigious; although, from what we have already obſerved, the reader muſt perceive that it formed merely a point in the Nile.

Memphis in turn ceded to the increaſing grandeur of Ptolemais and Alexandria. Another revolution of the ſame kind took place, on the building of

* No two ancient authors agree with regard to the ſize of Thebes. The aſſertions of Dydimus cannot be reconciled either with what Cato quotes from Stephen of Byzantium, or with the accounts of Diodorus, Strabo, or Euſtathius. They are all in contradiction to each other. The extent of *Avaris*, ſituated in lower Egypt, muſt likewiſe have been greatly exaggerated.

† Egypte ancienne, tom. i.

Cairo;

Cairo; and modern travellers have been as much deceived in the ſize of that town, as of Thebes. We may be aſſured, that its circuit never amounted to three French leagues, or eight Engliſh miles, as ſome have falſely aſſerted.

If Diodorus has given too much elevation to the houſes of ancient Egypt, they have been no leſs miſrepreſented by Mr. Pococke, who pretends that they were nothing more than tents; and according to this idea, an Egyptian town conſiſted of an encampment round a temple. But he is the only perſon, who ever accuſed the Egyptians of that manner of life, which they held in ſuch averſion, that they would not permit even the Jews to live in tents. The Turks ought in good policy to have acted in the ſame manner, with regard to the Bedouin Arabs, who, by continuing to encamp, bring ruin on the different provinces; and the maxim of preventing whole families from leading a wandering life, ſhould be ſtrictly obſerved in every country.

Having proceeded, as we propoſed, to place limits to the too great extent of Thebes, it is equally neceſſary to undeceive ourſelves with regard to the temples of ancient Egypt. They were certainly much leſs numerous than many authors believed, before the different ruins had been well aſcertained. It is generally underſtood, that the trunk of the palm-tree was the model for the columns of all theſe edifices: but, in that caſe, they would have preſerved a general reſemblance; and, on the contrary, nothing could be more varied. The ſame thing is remarkable in their

chapiters:

chapiters: thoſe in the form of a bell reverſed have been adopted in the Corinthian order; and the body of that chapiter is ſtill called *campana*. Thus the adventure of the baſket, found by Callimachus, ſupported by leaves of acanthus, is nothing more than a childiſh fable, invented by the Greeks, who wiſhed to conceal their having borrowed any thing from the Egyptians, while the contrary is manifeſtly evident. They pretended likewiſe that the triglyphs of the Doric order repreſented the ends of the beams reſting on the architrave. But they were invented by the Egyptian architects, or ſculptors, who never employed wood; and the Greeks have only added the *guttæ*, which do not ſeem very neceſſary. It is remarkable, that among all the ruins of Egypt, no columns have been found with vertebræ alternately of black and white marble. Yet the Egyptians certainly eſteemed greatly ſuch particolored buildings, although their effect muſt be truly diſagreeable. But we ſhould always remember, that the eyes of the inhabitants of the Eaſt are very different from ours.

Only one inſtance preſents itſelf, where the trunk of the palm-tree might really have been uſed as a model for columns. This was to ſatisfy the taſte of *Pharaoh Amaſis*, who cauſed many wonderful works to be conſtructed in the town of *Sais* only a few years before the fall of the Egyptian monarchy. Hence we may perceive, that the paſſion for building never diminiſhed in that country, where the heat of the climate, and the fertility of the ſoil, naturally inclined mankind to idleneſs. Ariſtotle juſtly ſuſpected that the

the prieſts did not wiſh the people to remain inactive *. Independently however of all political motives, they ſeem to have been perſuaded, that exerciſe was neceſſary for the preſervation of health among men ſubject to the leproſy; and frequent feſtivals were inſtituted to prevent their toils from becoming inſupportable. In a climate ſo ardent as that of Egypt, this management was very proper; although not at all calculated for colder regions, where the bodily forces are much leſs exhauſted in an equal ſpace of time. If all the colleges of Egypt really teſtified their diſcontent againſt king *Cheops*, it was not ſurely from any diſguſt at the pyramid he erected, but becauſe he forced the people to work on holidays. Yet the whole recital of that affair, given by Herodotus, ſeems to be a pure fiction, contradictory of all ideas we have received concerning the government of Egypt, which was much leſs deſpotic than modern authors pretend. It is ridiculous to hear them alledging, that, in a free country like England, no perſon would ever think of rearing pyramids; while we know, that the cultivation of the earth requires nine times more labor there than in Egypt. If exact liſts could be procured of all the Britiſh ſubjects, who periſh at ſea either by ſhipwrecks or other accidents, we ſhould find that navigation deſtroys more men in one year, than periſhed in many centuries by erecting the pyramids. As agriculture did not afford ſufficient employment for the Egyptians, who had neither a marine, nor any exterior commerce, it was neceſſary to

* Ariſtot. de Republic. lib. v.

direct

direct them to other purſuits. By reflecting on the flouriſhing ſtate of their country under the Pharaohs, and the miſerable ſituation into which it was reduced by the Chriſtian emperors, and afterwards by the Turks, we cannot refrain from being perſuaded, that the ancient government muſt have been better than ſome men of trifling genius pretend.

One event has been greatly exaggerated; and even allowing the whole to be literally true, we can only conſider it as an accident altogether unforeſeen. Pharaoh *Necho*, it is ſaid, in cauſing a communication to be opened between the Nile and the Arabic gulph, occaſioned the death of one hundred and twenty thouſand men. But how can it appear probable, that ſo many ſhould periſh on this occaſion, when Ptolemy Philadelphus completed a canal of the ſame kind in another place, without the loſs of a ſingle life?

Such popular reports may be accounted for in the following manner. The prieſts of Egypt diſapproved highly of the project of joining the Nile with the Red Sea. They even publiſhed an oracle, to prevent Pharaoh *Necho* from his enterpriſe; becauſe their exact local knowledge enabled them to foreſee, that ſuch attempts would be uſeleſs. The event juſtified their opinion, when Ptolemy afterwards endeavoured in vain to eſtabliſh a harbour for the commerce of India, and the coaſt of Africa, in the place where his canal entered the Arabic gulph. It became neceſſary to form a port much more to the ſouth; and thus the labor of cutting acroſs the iſthmus of *Suez* was entirely loſt. Strabo certainly erred greatly, by affirming

affirming that large veſſels, heavily laden, had navigated this cut; for we know that Cleopatra, at a criſis when her life and empire were at ſtake, could not paſs there, even with light galleys. The Turks were made to believe, in our own days, that if they wiſhed to obtain immenſe riches, nothing more was neceſſary than to open the ancient communication between the Nile and the harbour of *Suez*: but the perſon, ſent to examine the matter, diſſuaded the ſultan from this abſurd project. If a prince like Ptolemy, who already poſſeſſed one branch of the commerce of India, could not reap any advantage from this canal, what indeed might be expected by the Turks? They have there only twelve or thirteen veſſels, and theſe never leave the Arabic gulph, but are employed in tranſporting certain productions of India to *Giddah*, whence Europeans bring annually to the amount of ſix or ſeven hundred thouſand pounds ſterling. Conſidering the loſſes of the Turks by ſhipwrecks in returning from *Giddah* to *Suez*, it is evident, that they would avoid much riſk by diſcharging their cargoes at *Berenice*, and following the road by land, as was practiſed under the Ptolemies. Two tribes of robbers, or Bedouin Arabs, called *Beni-Waſſel* and *Arabdé*, might indeed be tempted to lay the caravans under contribution; and as the Turks govern ſo badly the countries ſubjected to their ſway, it is but juſt that they ſhould experience thoſe wrongs which they do to others.

To form an exact idea of the formation of the lake Mœris, it will be neceſſary to obſerve the map at the beginning

beginning of this volume, where it is placed to the north of the town of Crocodiles, or what is now called the province of *Feium*. Father Sicard erred egregiouſly in placing the lake too far to the ſouth, and converting it into a long canal parallel to the bed of the Nile. Mr. D'Anville has unaccountably adopted the ſame arrangement, although in oppoſition to ſuch geographers as Strabo and Ptolemy, as well as hiſtorians like Herodotus and Diodorus. The laſt of theſe writers ſays poſitively, that the Mœris was little diſtant from the town of Crocodiles *; and this paſſage, which contributes to determine its real poſition, muſt have eſcaped the attention of Mr. D'Anville †. Beſides, the inhabitants of the country aſſured Herodotus, that this lake communicated with the Syrtis of Africa by a ſubterraneous conduit, directed towards the weſt, and paſſing behind the mountains of Memphis. No other body of water anſwers this deſcription, except that now ſeen to the north of the province of *Feium*; and as Ptolemy and Strabo ſpeak with certainty, we may be aſſured, that this is the real *Mœris*. Thus D'Anville's Egypt has one falſe indication, and the error is copied in his great

* Bibliot. lib. ii.

† This geographer wiſhes to prove, in his *Memoirs on Ancient and Modern Egypt*, that Herodotus and Diodorus, in ſpeaking of the lake *Mœris*, have taken the meaſure of the ſurface for the circumference. An error of this kind would be inexcuſable in a child of ten years old. The Greeks could never be accuſed of ſuch imbecility; but they were always notorious for their exaggerations.

map,

map, becauſe he confided too much in the memoirs of Father Sicard, who was prevented by an untimely death from peruſing ancient authors with ſufficient attention. In conſequence of ſuch improper combinations, D'Anville's map points out two labyrinths, although one only was known to the ancients; and Egypt was certainly not the place to multiply objects without neceſſity.

At this day, the lake Mœris is thirty miles in length, and eight in breadth. That ſpace is ſufficiently extenſive to admit of various conjectures from thoſe who meaſure it with the eye only at different points of view. From eaſt to weſt, it appears larger than reality; and proportionably ſmaller, when ſeen from north to ſouth. As no naturaliſt has had an opportunity of examining it, we are at a loſs to determine whether it ſhould be conſidered as formed by the water of the Nile, which enters there, or, according to Strabo, as merely a veſtige of the Mediterranean. Perhaps indeed the Egyptians may have labored to drain the province of *Feium*, or the Arſenoite Nome, which appears to have been anciently a marſh, as well as the *Delta*. Having ſucceeded in that undertaking, they conducted thither the freſh water, by cutting apparently ſeven mouths, by which a part of the Nile was diſcharged into the lake Mœris, in the ſame manner as into the ſea *.

* Of ſeven mouths which belonged to the canal of communication between the Nile and the lake *Mœris*, ſix can now be diſtinctly obſerved when the river overflows and the dykes are opened.

After

After theſe explanations, we ſee why the Egyptians could boaſt that this lake was produced by their induſtry. Conſidering the utility of the work, we willingly pardon their ſuperſtition, in ſuppoſing a connexion between the mouths of their canal and the number of the planets. We have no information whatever concerning the ſubterraneous communication of the lake Mœris with the Syrtis mentioned by Herodotus. As that Greek did not underſtand the Egyptian language, he was perhaps miſled by the interpreters, and poſſibly alluded to what is called the *River without Water*, which ſome travellers are perſuaded has never been produced by human labor. But the error of Father Sicard was occaſioned by the mark of ſome great canal, or an ancient bed of the Nile, called *Bathen* in the French maps, and in the German *Gara*.

The Egyptians were infinitely more expert at conducting water, or digging ditches, than erecting any ſuperb and regular buildings. The great temple of *Heliopolis*, where neither labor nor expence was ſpared, could only be conſidered, ſays Strabo, as a barbarous fabric, deſtitute of taſte and elegance. It is with architecture as with painting, ſculpture, and muſic. The people of the Eaſt could never bring that art to any great degree of perfection; becauſe their fancy was too unruly to be governed by fixed principles.

Count Caylus has aſſerted, that the architects of Egypt were ignorant of the method of conſtructing vaults; and Mr. Goguet wiſhed to demonſtrate this

beyond diſpute, by engraving deſigns for the purpoſe, in his book on the Origin of the Sciences and Arts. Cornelius de Bruyn, however, having been enabled by means of flambeaux to obtain a drawing of an obſcure gallery in the great pyramid, gives his opinion, that it was really a vault *. Pliny ſays the ſame of the inferior apartments of the labyrinth. Thevenot found likewiſe ſome caves, intended for mummies, formed in that manner; and finally, Pococke diſcovered an Egyptian arch in the province of *Feium*. Thus Mr. Goguet and Count Caylus do not appear to have examined theſe matters with ſufficient attention. Indeed the difficulty of finding wood for ſcaffolding and frame-work, might have prevented the Egyptians from vaulting the great temples; or perhaps that mode of building was not conſidered by them as ſufficiently ſolid, according to their ideas of indeſtructibility. Every perſon knows the extreme ſcarcity of timber in that country; and to lay flat ſtones on the tops of pillars required few ſcaffolds: but whole foreſts would have been neceſſary to raiſe a vault for the prodigious temple of Thebes.

The Egyptians were the firſt people who conceived the idea, that a whole country might be fortified like a citadel; and the great rampart of Egypt muſt be conſidered as much more ancient than that of Media. Seſoſtris, who has been ſo improperly conſidered as a conqueror, endeavoured to put his own kingdom

* *Reizen door klein Aſia.* This traveller gives the name of *Gewelf* to the top of the gallery, and he would never have uſed that term without intending it to expreſs an arch.

into

into a ſtate of defence, by erecting a wall in an oblique line from the town of the Sun, ſituated without the Delta, to Peluſium. This diſtance amounted to fifteen hundred ſtadia of the ſmalleſt meaſure, or about eighty Engliſh miles; and the pretended hero was chiefly deſirous of preventing the ſhepherds of Arabia from invading Egypt, where their exceſſes were intolerable. What muſt be conſidered as very remarkable is, that the Bedouin Arabs, who encamp at this day ſo inſolently on the ruins of Alexandria, have preſerved the tradition of this great wall, ſo injudiciouſly conſtructed. It ended, as we have ſaid, at Peluſium *; and when once an enemy got poſſeſſion of that town, all the works of Seſoſtris were uſeleſs; becauſe no obſtacle afterwards remained in aſcending the Nile, as we find by the ſucceſſes of Cambyſes, and afterwards of Alexander.

This great rampart of Egypt has totally vaniſhed, no perſon knows in what manner. We have reaſon however to believe, that it was levelled during the conqueſt of the Perſians; for nothing of the kind exiſted in the reign of Artaxerxes *Mnemon*, when the Egyptians, ſupported by the auxiliary troops of Lacedæmon and Athens, made a laſt, but ineffectual effort to break their chains. Pharaoh Nectanebus

* Diodor. Bibl. lib. i. Egypt might have been more eaſily incloſed by building a wall from Peluſium to the town of Heroes. It appeared to me at firſt that the text of Diodorus was incorrect, and that Ἡρωωνπόλις ſhould be read inſtead of Ἡλιούπολις. Some conſiderations afterwards prevented me from adhering to that opinion.

then fortified anew the whole Peluſian branch of the Nile; and Chabrias, the Greek, who commanded under him, cloſed a ſecond time the avenues of Peluſium by a bulwark called *Charax Chabriæ* *. But theſe works have diſappeared, as well as thoſe of Seſoſtris; and we only find them in hiſtory, as laid down in the map annexed to this volume.

Mr. Maillet pretends, that ſome traces are ſeen of another wall, upwards of twenty-four feet thick, conſtructed by the Egyptians in the Heptanomis †. This however is not mentioned by ancient writers; and it muſt be conſidered as rather ſuſpicious; unleſs perhaps ſome ſuch method was adopted to protect the plain now called *Araba*. That diſtrict might in reality have had cultivated lands, near *Alabaſtrinopolis*, where a defile between two mountains required perhaps to be defended.

This mode of incloſing a country with walls has been conſidered as the ſtrongeſt proof of the reſemblance between the Egyptians and Chineſe. It will therefore be neceſſary to ſhow, that the ſame idea occurred to all ancient poliſhed nations, whenever they had for neighbours the Nomades, who never cultivate the earth, and are the ſcourge of civilized ſocieties. Paſtoral life has been conſidered by hiſtorians, who were not philoſophers, as the real ſtate of innocence; but it is, in fact, ſuch an incitement to rapine, that the terms Nomades and robbers are almoſt ſynonimous.

* Cor. Nepos in Vit. Chabriæ.—Strabo, Geograph.

† Deſcription of Egypt.

One

One great wall, which, on conſidering the poſition alone, ſeems to have been judicious enough, was erected in the valley between the Libanus and Anti-Libanus, to reſtrain the Scenite Arabs. Although amazingly ſtrong, this work was already ſo completely deſtroyed in the days of Pliny, that he ſpeaks of it as a monument no longer to be ſeen; but we find it deſcribed particularly by Diodorus Siculus *.

The Hebrews likewiſe, however ſtrange it may appear, undertook to build a wall of an hundred and fifty ſtadia, from the town of *Joppa* to *Antipatris* †. This rampart, like all the reſt, was ſoon overturned; and the Jews, who pretended to defend it againſt Antiochus, ſuffered themſelves to be defeated in a moſt ſhameful manner.

On the way from *Joppa*, along the coaſt of the Mediterranean, we find the great wall, which ſurrounded all the province of Pamphylia, and a part of Piſidia. Towards the end of the ſeventeenth century, ſome travellers, on their journey from Anthalia to Smyrna, diſcovered the wrecks of this vaſt bulwark ‡, concerning which authors are ſo ſilent, that we neither know when nor by whom it was erected. Yet no doubt remains but the object was to protect Pamphylia againſt the Iſaurians, who were ever averſe to good order. Their mountains were naturally arid; and inſtead of endeavouring to improve the ſoil, they only thought of making incurſions wherever any

* Plin. lib. v.—Diodorus, lib. xiv.

† Joſephus, Ant. Judaic. lib. xiii.

‡ Spon, Miſcell. erudit. Antiquit. ſect. vi.

hope could be entertained of pillage. They were called the chief of robbers, in preference to the Jews and Arabs; and in this profeſſion they diſcovered almoſt as much expertneſs as the Algerines in piracy. The Romans chaſtiſed them repeatedly; but they became again formidable under Valens, and his ſucceſſors; and we may therefore, without further details, conſider this rampart as a work of the lower empire.

Paſſing thence into the centre of Aſia, we find the great wall of Media, extending nearly from the Tigris to the Euphrates. Xenophon, the only perſon who ſpeaks of it from his own knowledge, fixes the length at twenty paraſangæ *. This does not agree with what we learn from Lucius Ampelius †, who is unpardonable in conſidering it as one of the wonders of the world. The height indeed was an hundred Grecian feet, and the breadth at leaſt twenty; but yet it had no title to be ranked among the greateſt of all human productions. As the ſtones were cemented with bitumen, it was eaſy for enemies, by means of burning cakes of the ſame ſubſtance, to calcinate the places where they wiſhed to open a paſſage. Artaxerxes, to prevent ſuch accidents, cauſed large ditches to be dug before it, and filled with the water

* Retreat of the Ten Thouſand.

† De Mirabilibus, cap. ix. The thirty Roman miles given by Ampelius to the wall of Media make only ten paraſangæ. His text ſhould therefore be changed to *ſixty miles*, which are within thirty fathoms of the twenty paraſangæ mentioned by Xenophon.

of

of the Tigris. Thus, to protect one very feeble work, he undertook another equally inefficacious.

Theſe prodigious fortifications, now no longer viſible, were intended to protect Babylon, and a part of ſouthern Babylonia, againſt the inhabitants of the confines of Armenia and Meſopotamia. Theſe could not however have been very numerous; for their mountains were no leſs ſterile than thoſe of Iſauria; and perhaps the ſame race ſtill exiſts, under the name of *Satchlis*, towards the *Sengar*. As the Greeks and Romans had the folly of attributing to Semiramis every thing of that kind beyond the Euphrates, they did not fail to give her credit likewiſe for the great wall of Media. Suppoſing this to be fact, it would of courſe follow, that the Aſſyrians, who then trembled before a ſmall nation of ſavages, were not in a ſtate to alarm all Aſia with their numerous armies. But let it be remembered, that thoſe, who wrote this hiſtory of Semiramis and the Aſſyrians, were not philoſophers.

Previous to arriving at the *Van-ly* of China, two walls were formerly ſeen to the weſt of the Caſpian ſea: they formed part of a chain ſurrounding almoſt the whole of that extenſive portion of the globe, called by us Tartary, but known to the ancients by the name of Scythia. Although both theſe terms are very improper, it is ſcarcely poſſible to expreſs better a multitude of nations, almoſt without exception Nomades and wandering.

Amidſt the ſandy Hircanian deſerts, the canton of Margiania enjoys all the favors of nature. Alex-

ander was ſo much charmed with the beauty of this delightful ſpot, that he reſolved to found a city in its vicinity; and although death prevented him from executing his project, it was afterwards reſumed by Antiochus, ſon of Seleucus Nicator. Experience, however, ſoon proved the neceſſity of protecting in ſome way or other the cultivated lands from the ravages of the Scythians; and he therefore ſurrounded the whole diſtrict with a wall fifteen hundred ſtadia in length. As that meaſurement cannot be calculated at leſs than one hundred and twenty miles, ſo extenſive an undertaking is entitled to ſome attention in our preſent reſearches *. But when we add, that the town, founded by Antiochus, was afterwards repeatedly pillaged, and finally committed to the flames by the Tartars, it is almoſt needleſs to obſerve, that this bulwark reſembled all the others by its total inefficacy.

Under the forty-ſecond degree of north latitude, the great wall of *Ilak* extended from *Shabaleg* to the extremity of the valley of *Alſhaſh*, a diſtance of more than twenty leagues. Little local knowledge is neceſſary to conceive that it was intended to prevent the robbers of Turkeſtan from annoying the town of *Toncat* and its neighbourhood, which, in the fourteenth century, was cultivated like a garden, and interſected by a thouſand canals. Nature, ſays Abulfeda, is no-where more beautiful than in this charming ſpot, covered with flowers and fruits †. But it

* Strabo, Geograph. lib. xi.

† *Locorum omnium quæ Deus creavit, amæniſſimus*, ſays the tranſlator of Abulfeda, Deſcript. Choraſ. & Mawaralnahræ.

muſt

muſt be owing to the viſits of the Tartars that the vicinity of that town is now deſert. Some other conſiderable cities of *Mawar-al-nahr*, ſuch as *Samarcand* and *Bochara*, had likewiſe ſurrounded the whole of their cultivated territories by vaſt walls to a great extent. Agriculture was effaced wherever the paſtoral hordes appeared. They made a practice of pillaging and deſtroying, to enforce their maxim, that poſſeſſion cannot render lands a property. The fall of the empire of Tamerlane, who was very partial to Samarcand, occaſioned the deſtruction of all the beautiful provinces ſituated beyond the Oxus, or Gihon. Nothing now prevents the Nomades from traverſing them with their flocks; and the whole region contains only miſerable wretches, who exiſt by mutual robberies. It is unaccountable that the Chineſe emperor, *Kien-long*, was not tempted to take poſſeſſion of ſo fertile a country, when, in our days, he advanced as far as *Badakchan*, and there terminated his expedition. This Tartar prince was erroneouſly repreſented in Europe as having extended his conqueſts to the Caſpian ſea; and Mr. Boyſen has inſerted the ſame miſtake in his extracts from univerſal hiſtory, although *Badakchan* is more than one hundred and fifty leagues diſtant from the Caſpian ſea.

Of all the barriers oppoſed to the irruptions of the Tartars we muſt allow that the Chineſe wall is the greateſt, and likewiſe the moſt feeble, becauſe the ſtrength of ſuch lines diminiſhes in proportion to their extent. How could men, incapable of defending a redoubt, think of forming ſuch prodigi-

ous

ous lines, which, if penetrated in any one place, became totally uſeleſs? In its origin, the *Van-ly* of China was very different from what it appeared afterwards. Some independent princes raiſed walls in various places, to break the impetuoſity of the Tartar cavalry, without conſidering that a triple row of paliſades would have proved far more effectual, as we find to be the caſe along the *Zeang-tong*. It has been ſaid, and believed in Europe, that the emperor *Schi-chuan-di* undertook and executed the whole work in the courſe of five years; but this is a vulgar report, unworthy of the ſmalleſt degree of credit. *Schi-chuan-di* was not yet born, when the princes of *Tzin*, having fortified a part of the province of *Chen-ſi*, were imitated by the princes of *Tchao* and *Yen*, who covered in the ſame manner, but more ſtrongly, the provinces of *Chan-ſi* and *Pe-tcheli*. The bad chronology and diſorder of the Chineſe books will not allow us to fix the preciſe period when the firſt labors of that kind commenced there; but it is ſuppoſed to have been about three hundred years before our era *.

All the princes we have mentioned were really independent ſovereigns, who admitted no ſuperiority even in the emperor. As they conſulted only the ſafety of their particular ſtates, no general plan was purſued, and many interſtices remained among the

* What Mr. de Guignes ſays of the conſtruction of the Chineſe wall, in the *Hiſtory of the Huns*, is not exact. He confounds the emperor *Schi-chuan-di* with another prince of *Tzin*, who reigned at a much earlier period.

different

different ramparts. Yet the whole of this undertaking, however it may be conſidered, tends to prove, that, under their reign, the ſtate of population was flouriſhing, and the government far more moderate than the oppreſſive deſpotiſm of the Chineſe emperors.

The monſter *Schi-chuan-di*, in defiance of all laws human or divine, deſtroyed entirely theſe independent ſovereigns, and he afterwards united the different works they had raiſed againſt the Tartars. This chain was uninterrupted, unleſs by groups of rocks, until it reached the borders of *Chan-ſi*. Although the great wall is generally computed to be five hundred leagues in length, yet it really does not exceed three hundred and forty; becauſe we cannot conſider as ſuch the branch extending weſtward from *Chan-ſi*, where earth only is employed, without either brick or mortar, and the ſides ſo ill ſecured that even cavalry can effect a paſſage. Thus we find how much it falls ſhort of the idea generally received in Europe, where no copies have hitherto been obtained of the inſcriptions ſaid to be found there. The miſſionaries pretend, that in the province of *Chan-tong* likewiſe certain characters are diſcovered on the ſide of mount *Tai-chan*, which no perſon can explain: but ſomething of the ſame kind, ſeen on the rocks of Siberia, is not conſidered as a monument of great antiquity *.

On

* Strahlenberg, Obſervat. With regard to the nine marble drums which Father *Mailla* ſays he found in the college of Pekin,

On conſidering attentively the *Van-ly-czin*, called hyperbolically by the Chineſe the Wall of ten thouſand *lys*, it is evident, that a more uſeleſs work was never reared by man ſince the beginning of the world. The weſtern Tartars, by turning from the ſtrait road, and inclining towards the fortieth degree, could at all times enter China, without perceiving either the terrace of *Chen-ſi*, or the great wall. Marco Polo went with a troop of Tartars to Pekin, returned into Italy, and died at Venice, totally ignorant of that rampart. This made ſome of the learned believe, that it had not been conſtructed until after the thirteenth century; for, according to them, the ſilence of Marco Polo was of more weight than the depoſitions of hiſtory.

Experience has taught the Chineſe, that the Tartars cannot be reſtrained, but by having well-diſciplined cavalry to diſſipate the hordes, when they begin to collect in their own country. Whenever they are allowed to unite and conſpire, all is loſt. The emperor *Can-hi*, who was himſelf a Mandhui, knew this perfectly well, and on the leaſt noiſe of war, he invaded the territory of the Eleuths, and prevented great battles by a few ſkirmiſhes. We have ſeen the emperor *Kien-long* imitating this conduct with equal ſucceſs: conſequently the *Van-ly-czin* is allowed to decay, as well as the wall of Corea; and in a few

Pekin, we have only to obſerve, that the ſuperſtition of the Chineſe for the number nine might eaſily have induced them to hew as many pieces of ſtone in that form.

centuries,

centuries, even the ruins muſt diſappear, or be traced with difficulty.

Ruſſia, expoſed nearly in the ſame manner to the Tartars, had recourſe to ſimilar means of reſtraining them, at a time when, ſo far from foreſeeing its future grandeur, that nation almoſt deſpaired of ſafety. By one of thoſe events, almoſt unexampled in hiſtory, we know, that the Moguls, in the thirteenth century, extended their conqueſts over the greater part of Aſia and Africa. They ſubjugated China on one ſide, and Ruſſia on the other, while the whole ancient continent reſounded with the din of arms. In the year one thouſand two hundred and thirty ſeven, *Bathi-Sain* entered Ruſſia, at the head of what was called the *Gilded Horde*, from being covered with ſpoils. It was compoſed of choſen men, who thought themſelves capable of extending in ten years their empire over Europe; but they were unacquainted with Germany, where their approach did not occaſion ſo much terror as the monks and pope particularly experienced in Italy. The conduct of *Bathi-Sain* was perfectly conformable to that of his couſin *Koublai-Kan* in China: he cauſed ſeveral towns, and among the reſt *Caſan*, to be built along the Wolga *; but, inſtead of depoſing the grand dukes of Ruſſia, they were allowed, on paying a certain tribute, to preſerve what was conſidered an empty title, and the ſhadow of authority. That unpardonable fault in politics ruined at length the ſovereignty of the

* Verſuch einer Hiſtorie von Kaſan.

Tartars;

Tartars; who, beſides, by requiring too great contributions in a poor country, excited ſo many revolts, that their reign was nothing but continual war. On the other hand, they weakened themſelves by allowing ſmall bands to ſeparate from the great horde; for the trunk, inſtead of being fortified by ſuch ſuckers, was exhauſted. They loſt ſucceſſively the kingdom of *Caſan* and *Aſtracan*; but they maintained themſelves in the Crimea, where they afterwards acquired ſtrength enough to undertake new excurſions, and even to ſet fire to the city of *Moſcow*. This new diſaſter induced Fidor Janowitz, or rather his tutor Boritz Goudnow, to fortify the limits of the empire. Theſe works, apparently nothing more at firſt than a great ditch, like that ſeen in Africa towards *Thene*, were in time converted into a continued bulwark, extending upwards of one hundred and forty leagues, from *Toula*, in the government of *Moſcow*, to *Sibiriſki*, in the kingdom of *Caſan*. Ruſſia muſt have been ſtill equally expoſed to invaſions, had not a prince at length ſucceeded ſo many Czars. Peter the Firſt, inſtead of repairing the ancient rampart, defeated the Tartars, and contented himſelf with hemming them in with the lines of the Ukrain, which remain unimpaired to the preſent day.

The great route of the barbarians, in their excurſions from what the ancients called Scythia, lay formerly between the Caſpian and the Euxine ſeas. This ſuggeſted the idea of cloſing up all the defiles of mount Caucaſus; and ſeveral veſtiges of theſe walls

are

are ſtill found in the diſtrict of *Souanis*: but the moſt conſiderable work ever erected in that part of the globe was the wall of Colchis. That province, now ſo deſolate, received then all the merchandize of India. Such great riches, heaped up by the Phenicians and Greeks, who had vaſt marts for commerce eſtabliſhed on the Phaſis, irritated continually the covetouſneſs of a barbarous people called *Acbas*, or ſome other term ſtill more corrupt, by the French geographers. Their real name was *Awchaſzi*, and they are even ſuppoſed to ſpring from the ſame ſtock with the *Aſes*, who, under the direction of Odin, penetrated into Sweden, according to northern fables. The *Awchaſzi*, however, always inhabited, and are ſtill found between the mouth of the *Don* and the river *Corax*. They made their irruptions into the centre of Colchis, by paſſing along the ſhore of the Black Sea, and through the ſtrait ſomewhat beyond Petyunta. At length this paſſage was cloſed by a wall, ſuppoſed to be the ſtrongeſt ever reared by man, and therefore diſtinguiſhed by the name of *Murus validus* *. But the *Awchaſzi*, by directing their courſe to the left of this place, rendered its ſtrength uſeleſs; and another wall was therefore oppoſed to them of more than one hundred and ſixty miles in length. It might indeed be conſidered as one of the greateſt undertakings of the kind, from being exceedingly well built throughout, and ſtrengthened at equal diſtances with towers. Yet Chardin could no

* D'Anville's Ancient Geography, vol. ii.

longer

longer find even its ruins in one thouſand ſix hundred and ſeventy-two, becauſe they were concealed among impenetrable foreſts *.

Colchis exhibits one very remarkable circumſtance: extreme deſpotiſm has reduced the inhabitants to a ſavage ſtate; and no other cauſe is capable of producing that effect on a people once poliſhed. Even the dreadful black peſtilence, and all the ravages of the Huns, never occaſioned any thing of the kind in Europe.

The iſthmus of the Taurica Cherſoneſus was anciently fortified by a ditch called *Taphros* in Greek; and afterwards by a wall in the place where we now find the lines of the Crimea. When the Caſpian barriers and thoſe of Caucaſus are added to the others already mentioned, we find that from the Boriſthenes to the very extremity of the ancient continent, almoſt the whole of Tartary has been incloſed to the ſouth by a prodigious chain of ramparts. They were evidently erected with the intention of reſtraining the inhabitants of that region, who paſſed them, however, as often as they thought proper. Although thoſe people, truly remarkable on ſo many accounts, have had all the treaſures of Europe and Aſia in their poſſeſſion, yet they never transferred any to their own country; becauſe their leaders either periſhed amidſt the torrent of their conqueſts, or eſtabliſhed themſelves in the regions they had ſubdued. The Romans, on the contrary, filled

* Chardin, vol. i.

the

the capital of Italy with the ſpoils of the univerſe; and what occaſioned their weakneſs, was long the ſupport of the Tartars, who are now in a more critical ſituation than ever was experienced by any nation. Theſe unfortunate people can now ſcarcely breathe, from being preſſed together between China and Ruſſia, the two greateſt empires ever known on our globe. But the project of depriving them entirely of their horſes is impracticable; although it is ſaid to have been propoſed by the Mandhuis to *Kien-long*, in order to render the Tartars for ever incapable of what they call brilliant expeditions.

Fortified provinces in ancient Europe were likewiſe very numerous; and although they did not equal thoſe of Aſia in extent, they may at leaſt be compared to them for their inutility. The Athenian colonies, ſent into the Thracian Cherſoneſus, under the conduct of Miltiades, cloſed up the Iſthmus by a wall called *macron teichos* *. It reached from Pactya to Cardia; and in the Periplus of Scylax, the diſtance between the two towns is laid down at forty ſtadia. This work, having been partly ruined, was repaired and augmented by two branches, of which no traces can now be found.

After all the pains taken in ancient times to open the Iſthmus of Corinth, a plan totally oppoſite was at length adopted, and Manuel Paleologus conſtructed acroſs the neck a very thick wall, on which the ſafety of the Greeks was ſuppoſed to depend. It might

* Herodotus, lib. vi. Pliny, lib. iv.

indeed have anſwered ſome purpoſe, had they diſcovered more bravery, and made better diſpoſitions; but by concealing themſelves behind this rampart, they were prevented from fighting; and afterwards it impeded their flight. The Turks never made more priſoners in one day than when they forced the lines of the Morea; and although the Venetians were laborious enough to rebuild this barrier, it was ſoon after deſtroyed a ſecond time by the Ottomans. If the intereſts of the Venetians required the Iſthmus of Corinth to be ſhut, the Turks had at leaſt equal inducements to keep it open.

We have now to indicate the third *macron teichos*, or the long wall of Anaſtaſius, formed about twenty-five or thirty miles in front of Conſtantinople. Zonaras ſays, that it began at Selymbria *; but the ruins ſtill ſeen, extend from a little beyond Heraclea to Dercon, and thus all the country between the Propontis and the Euxine ſea was incloſed for a diſtance of four hundred and twenty ſtadia. An eccleſiaſtical writer, named Evagrius, inſinuates that, behind this bulwark, a canal was dug to convey veſſels along the continent from the one ſea to the other. Conſtantinople, ſays he, formerly ſituated in a peninſula, became in this manner an iſland †. The man however appears too injudicious for any dependance to be placed on his teſtimony. Nothing could be more humiliating to the eaſtern empire than this mode of defending its capi-

* Annal. in Anaſtaſ. Dicor.

† Evag. lib. iii. Suidas, and Nicephorus, lib. xxxix.

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tal againſt the Bulgarian, Thracian, and Scythian cavalry. But Anaſtaſius had no horſemen capable of oppoſing thoſe of the enemy; and to preſerve Conſtantinople, he was forced to abandon all his European territories, except the ſmall ſpot within the great wall. Every thing beyond it was at the diſcretion of the barbarians, who had long before cleared the paſſes of mount Hæmus; and the *macron teichos* no longer remained, when the Turks came to beſiege Conſtantinople.

Such, even in the beginning of the ſixteenth century, was the ſtate of that empire, which ſeems to have paſſed through all the different degrees of decay; and no power was ever more regularly deſtroyed. The ſciences were loſt firſt; then the arts; military diſcipline afterwards; and finally every thing that reſembled force or conduct. But what never ceaſed in thoſe unfortunate times were enormous taxes, and religious diſputes, which contributed greatly to throw all parts of the government into a diſorder, hitherto unexampled in hiſtory.

Some veſtiges of a fourth *macron teichos*, ſtill more extenſive than that of Anaſtaſius, are found in Bulgaria, near a town called *Dryſta*. But we can only learn, from the ſtyle of architecture, that it muſt have been raiſed by ſome Greek emperor, who oppoſed this barrier in vain to the inundations of barbarians. It is not ſurpriſing that ſo little ſhould be known of a monument of this kind in a ſavage region, when a total ignorance prevails relative to the wall of Valais. Many conſiderable fragments of

that fabric are ſeen ſtill between the Rhone and Burgberg; but no perſon can determine whether it was built before the days of Cæſar, or only in imitation of the rampart he employed ſo ineffectually againſt the Swiſs: to me however the former opinion ſeems highly improbable.

Much confuſion likewiſe appears in what has been written concerning the different works of this kind conſtructed by the Roman emperors in Great Britain. Even the authors of that country are not all of the ſame ſentiments; but we ſhall endeavour, in a few words, to remove ſome of the principal difficulties. Agricola, who knew the iſland perfectly well, was perſuaded that nothing was more neceſſary than to keep poſſeſſion of a paſs, thirty-two miles acroſs, between the river *Clyde* and the *Frith of Forth*. Adrian, however, inſtead of adopting this plan, choſe another place eighty miles broad; and it ſhould be obſerved, that the military mile is eſtimated there at four hundred and twenty feet more than on the continent. Thus the Romans began by conſtructing a *vallum* of piles and ſods, twice longer than was neceſſary. This rampart proved ineffectual: another, built by Antoninus Pius, was ſoon deſtroyed; and a third, by Severus, ſhared the ſame fate. At length, under the reign of Valentinian the third, Ætius, conceiving that all theſe works had failed from the nature of their conſtruction, cauſed a real wall twenty feet thick to be erected. But to prove how much he was miſtaken, this rampart had not been finiſhed five years before it was forced, firſt at one place, and

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afterwards every-where. Buchanan aſſures us, that the ruins began to be found only in his day; and they are at leaſt ſo far uſeful, that they now ſerve to build houſes *.

By theſe and many other facts, we find that the origin of the power of the barbarians ſhould be dated in the reign of Adrian, when the fortifications raiſed againſt them revealed the ſecret of their force. In proportion as the Romans intrenched the limits of the empire, their military diſcipline declined; and the ſame effect muſt have been obſerved in every country incloſed by walls, without even excepting China. Thus all the bulwarks, raiſed in Great Britain, were leſs effectual, as we have ſeen, than the judicious poſts and encampments of Agricola.

The Romans conſtructed likewiſe a great wall in upper Germany, equally faulty, and as difficult to be defended as that of China. D'Anville's map of ancient Germany makes it begin oppoſite *Ober-Weſel*; and after placing many interſtices, the ſtrongeſt part is repreſented to have been at a ſpot where the emperor Valentinian raiſed ſome works on the lower Necker. This arrangement, however, cannot be adopted; for the line was certainly uninterrupted, and equally fortified in its whole extent. Mr. Hanſelman, who has given a good deſcription of this work in German, ſays, that the tradition of the country ſtates it as having been commenced in the reign of Adrian, and continued by his ſucceſſors. The laſt branch, which ſtretched towards the Danube, was added by Probus,

* Buchanan, lib. iv. Polydor. Virgil, lib. i.

as ſome medals of that prince teſtify beyond a doubt *. It began on the banks of the Rhine, oppoſite Bingen, where the Romans had a fortified camp ever ſince the time of Auguſtus: thence it paſſed into the county of Solms, forming an elbow to approach the Mein; and continuing through the foreſt of Otton, or Odenwald, it croſſed the county of Holach, touched the Necker, ſtretched to Hall in Suabia, and taking the direction of Eichſtadt and Weiſſenburgh, terminated at Pfeurring in the territory of Ratiſbon. Thus no paſſage was left open in all the vaſt ſpace between the Rhine and the Danube; and, from the ruins ſtill found, we have reaſon to believe, that this rampart contained entire citadels, and numerous towers, ſtrongly fortified. The Romans were obliged to give it ſo winding a courſe, in order to cover the territories of ſome nations, ſuch as the *Mattiaci*, with whom they were ſtrictly allied. But even by being conſtructed in the ſhorteſt line poſſible, it could not have anſwered the purpoſe of reſtraining the *Catti*, and other German nations, ſtyled wandering, becauſe, having no country, they ſought one throughout the whole world. Marching with their flocks, like the Tartars, they reſembled them alſo in the aſtoniſhing facility with which they changed the paſtoral for a military life. Germany had anciently many ſuch hordes, who wandered about conſtantly,

* Dæderlein, Vorſtellung des alten Rœmiſchen *Valli* und Landwehr, iii. Abſch. The work of Mr. Hanſelman may likewiſe be conſulted; the object of which is to inquire how far the Romans had ever penetrated into Suabia, and high Germany.

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and emigrated frequently. The ſettled cantons had no other means of defence in thoſe days, againſt unexpected attacks, than by ſurrounding themſelves with vaſt deſerts; and this method, ſtill practiſed in the time of Julius Cæſar, would have kept them always barbarians. But afterwards the Germans, having procured better inſtruments for cutting down the woods, and digging the earth, fortified themſelves againſt each other by works called *Landwehr*. The idea of this kind of rampart is ſuppoſed to have originated in Gaul; although it was generally practiſed among all nations, when they began to cultivate the earth regularly in thoſe countries, where their neighbours continued to be wandering.

It will be ſufficient here juſt to mention a *vallum Romanum*, extending from *Widdin* to *Little Waradin*, and ſome other mounds of the ſame kind, conſtructed by the Goths, who, of all the barbarians at that time, inclined moſt to civilization. In the north of Europe, we find the *Danewerck*, raiſed by the Normans, when they began to be known by the name of Danes. To prevent the incurſions of the Saxons into Jutland, they endeavoured to ſhut up the paſſage by a terrace, extending to the ſhore of the Baltic; and on this very dike, Waldemar the Great conſtructed a wall, which is leſs injured at the preſent day, than could well be expected.

Such is the hiſtory of the greateſt and moſt uſeleſs works ever reared by man on the ſurface of the ancient continent.

THIRD PART.

SECT. VII.

RELIGION OF THE EGYPTIANS.

THE religion of ancient Egypt is a real abyſs, where many writers have been ſwallowed up in attempting to ſound its depth. Such numerous and different ſuperſtitions, which ſometimes are altogether inexplicable, can never admit of being reduced to any particular ſyſtem.

Van Dale had reaſon to believe, that the ſacred animals were inſtituted in Egypt for the purpoſe of divination. Yet, if we except one obſcure paſſage in Ælian relative to crocodiles, nothing is known with certainty of any other oracles, than thoſe of the bull *Apis*, which comprehended every thing, although they were originally confined to the overflowing of the Nile. On this point the Egyptians have at all times teſtified the greateſt inquietude, without conſidering that other animals were as ignorant of the matter as themſelves. The crocodiles are ſaid to depoſite their eggs beyond the reach of the inundations; but this is a vulgar opinion, adopted only in ſome towns ſituated on the branches of the Nile.

Nile. Naturaliſts believe that the hippopotamus gives ſurer indications; becauſe the inhabitants pretend to have obſerved that when, previous to the floods, it frequently appears on ſhore, the river always riſes ſufficiently afterwards to water the lands. The Copts, however, at this day employ no animal in their prognoſtics on the ſtate of the Nile; and yet their ceremonies for that purpoſe, during which even the Turks aſſiſt at maſs, are fully as ſuperſtitious as the mode of interrogating the bull Apis. When that animal refuſed to eat, the omen was not leſs fatal than the abſtinence of the ſacred chickens, which were conſulted by the Romans on great affairs, while matters of little conſequence could be decided by crows. If Juvenal had been judicious enough to reflect on this, he would not have written his ſatire on the Egyptians; for the difference between ſuppoſing a calf or a chicken acquainted with future events is ſurely not very material.

By all that has been collected in this Section, reſpecting the worſhip offered to ſcarabees, it appears that they likewiſe ſerved for auguries; and we muſt ſuppoſe thoſe inſects at leaſt as well informed in ſuch matters as the prieſteſſes of Delphi; for whom Plato teſtified ſo much regard. This was in conſequence of his being perſuaded that no civilized nation can have a reaſonable religion; and the ſame ſentiment ſeems to have prevailed among all the legiſlators of antiquity. We ſhall ſee preſently, that this falſe and whimſical opinion was founded entirely on the ſuppoſed danger of making innovations in the religious practices,

practices, which had been received from the ſavages of the country, or, as Plato ſtyles them, the indigenous inhabitants.

The greater part of the religious ceremonies of the Egyptians came from the ſavages of Ethiopia, as Diodorus ſays in the moſt unequivocal manner; and the fact is of a nature not to be doubted. Yet no perſon has hitherto ever undertaken to ſeek in Ethiopia the origin of a worſhip, evidently invented there. Mr. Jablonſki was perfectly capable of making ſuch reſearches, the reſult of which would have been infinitely more ſatisfactory than the conjectures he has hazarded, and the contradictions he could not avoid.

At the article *Phtha*, he deſcribes the Egyptians as atheiſts, whoſe ſyſtem reſembled too exactly that of Spinoſa, for any perſon to be deceived, who had the leaſt penetration.

At the article *Cneph*, or *Cnuphis*, he changes the ſame Egyptians into deiſts, who admit of an intelligent Being diſtinct from matter—the Sovereign of Nature.

Mr. Jablonſki, who had much good ſenſe, and ſtill more erudition, would ſurely have reaſoned in a different manner, had he been leſs connected with La Croze, who, by the confeſſion even of his panegyriſt, became a mere viſionary in the decline of life, without any ſigns of the little judgment he formerly poſſeſſed. That man, bred a monk, flattered himſelf greatly on his penetration in diſcovering atheiſm every-where; and he fancied he had found it in the wretched

wretched Latin verſes compoſed by a fool, called Jordan le Brun, who was committed to the flames by ſome villains in Italy. It is madneſs, or at leaſt imbecility, to accuſe whole nations of atheiſm, when they produce a few bad metaphyſicians, who by means of certain ſubtilties loſe themſelves in a cloud of ideas; and their abſurdities diſcover impertinent reaſoners, rather than atheiſts ſeriouſly determined on maintaining their opinions. Thoſe, who adopt ſyſtems without knowing the objections they may encounter, would do better to remain within the limits of incertitude.

Ancient hiſtorians and geographers unfortunately give us very little information concerning the Ethiopians. Yet the few notions we have been able to collect, are ſufficient to explain ſeveral difficulties, and render the way leſs obſcure. In the firſt place, it appears certain, that, with regard to religious matters, they always remained cloſely connected with the Egyptians. They came annually to carry the ſhrine of Jupiter Ammon from Thebes to the limits of Ethiopia, where a ſolemn feaſt was celebrated, which certainly gave riſe to the ſingular tradition of the gods coming to eat at the Heliotrapeze, or the *Table of the Sun* *. When Homer aſſures us, in the Iliad, that Jupiter went frequently into Ethiopia, to aſſiſt at a great feſtival, we may ſuppoſe the poet informed of this ceremony †. Herodotus has erred in placing the *Table of the Sun* at Meroe, although Solnus ſup-

* Diodorus, lib. ii.—Euſtat. in Iliad.

† Lib. i.

poſes

poſes it to have been ſtill more towards the ſouth. The whole proceſſion required, as we are told, only twelve days, in going and returning by a different road from that which extended along the eaſt bank of the Nile; and it is impoſſible to perform the journey in that time by the ſhorteſt way from Thebes to Meroe. The latter place had, however, a temple dedicated likewiſe to Jupiter Ammon*; and this fact tends alſo to prove, that the religion of the Egyptians and of the Ethiopians was originally the ſame. Among the former, indeed, ſome changes had been introduced in the courſe of many centuries; and the moſt important of all related to the immolation of human victims. Heliodorus, although a great admirer of the Ethiopians, admits that they ſacrificed boys to the Sun, and girls to the Moon†. The colony ſent by them into Egypt, continued likewiſe to ſlaughter ſtrangers, or men with red hair, on the tomb of Oſiris, or the ſtones conſecrated to the Sun; and women were moſt probably ſacrificed to the Moon, in a ſmall town called by the Greeks *Ilithya*. Some remains of that place are ſtill found on the right bank of the Nile, near a ſpot known by the

* Plinius, lib. vi. cap. 29.

† Æthiop. lib. x. Heliodorus ſays, that the Ethiopians ſacrificed ſtrangers only who were taken in war; and although the gymnoſophiſts reprobated ſuch ſacrifices, the people perſiſted in offering them. The Greeks imagined that the Egyptians immolated red-haired men in the town of Diana, or Ilithya: but, in my opinion, it is more probable that they ſacrificed women.

name

name of *El-Kab*, not more than twenty-four leagues from the confines of Ethiopia.

Mr. Jablonſki was therefore wrong in ſuppoſing, that theſe atrocities had been borrowed from the ſhepherd Arabs. They were at length totally aboliſhed in the reign of Pharaoh Amaſis; while the famous law for burning hereties alive, was not repealed in England until the time of Charles II. The hiſtory of Egypt has never ſince afforded any inſtances of that nature: but in Ethiopia it was more difficult to reform religion, becauſe the civil laws had leſs power over the people, who were frequently diſperſed either in hunting, or wandering with their flocks in ſearch of paſture.

The firſt gymnoſophiſts of Ethiopia moſt probably were nothing more than wandering prieſts, like thoſe ſtill known in Africa by the name of *Marabut*. That word, literally tranſlated, ſignifies *Child of the burning reed*; either becauſe thoſe impoſtors ſometimes burn their victims with reeds, or perhaps in alluſion to their pretending to vomit fire, while they conceal kindled tow under their garments. An example of this was ſeen in one thouſand ſeven hundred and thirty-one; but executed in ſo awkward a manner, that negroes only could have ſwallowed the deception. When a nation has no other than wandering prieſts, it is eaſy to conceive, that among the numberleſs different ſuperſtitions introduced there, ſome muſt of courſe be contradictory; becauſe opinions not being reduced to any body of doctrine, each juggler endeavours to advance his own. Count

Boulainvilliers ſays, that among people like the ſhepherd Arabs, the idea of a God Creator muſt have been longeſt preſerved in all its purity *. But he knew nothing at all of the ancient Arabs, concerning whom Sale has procured explications, which prove that their notions of the Divinity were very degraded. This indeed muſt have been the caſe, becauſe each tribe multiplied the number of Fetiches and Manitous, of which the ſacred animals of Egypt and Greece are the remains. For it might be proved, if the thing appeared of ſufficient conſequence, that the Greeks were likewiſe greatly attached to the worſhip of animals: they revered, to a certainty, about twelve or thirteen different kinds, without including the weaſel of Bæotia.

The ſpirit of the gymnoſophiſts did not begin to be developed until they were united in a ſedentary body, or college, principally ſtationed at Meroe. They then began to apply themſelves to ſtudy, and place ſome order among the Ethiopian hieroglyphics: but unfortunately the treatiſe written particularly on that ſubject, by the philoſopher Democritus, is entirely loſt †. No perſon ſhould be tempted to credit ſuch extravagant praiſes as thoſe laviſhed by the Roman writer Philoſtratus, on the gymnoſophiſts ‡. Yet it is poſſible, that in laboring to compile their hieroglyphics, they might have invented the ſyllabical alphabet, uſed at this day in Abyſſinia and Nubia,

* Life of Mahomet. † Apud Laertium.

‡ In vit. Apollon. lib. vi cap. 6.

whither

whither it could not be brought from any other country *. That diſcovery was the more intereſting, as without it literal characters could never have been invented. It is a ſtrange folly in Plato to accuſe the prieſts of Egypt of having injured irreparably the ſciences, by inventing the art of writing. According to him, it tends prodigiouſly to weaken the memory; and Julius Cæſar ſeems inclined to ſupport this prejudice, when ſpeaking of the Druids, who ſurely never got any thing by heart but abſurdities.

Although ſome paſſages are found in Diodorus and Strabo, relative to the opinions of the gymnoſophiſts concerning the Divinity, yet it muſt be confeſſed that they are very obſcure. They ſeem founded entirely on the authority of ſome Greek merchants, who about the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus began to penetrate into the centre of Africa. We know nothing more with certainty, than that they acknowledged the exiſtence of a God Creator, incomprehenſible by his nature, but viſible in his works, which, according to them, are equally animated with the divine ſpirit. From this doctrine proceeded the ſymbolical worſhip adapted to the genius of the Africans, whoſe ardent imagination required to be fixed by palpable objects like the Fetiches, and their anxiety concerning futurity, calmed by auguries. The Greeks and Romans conſulted the oracles every in-

* Herodotus obſerves, in his fourth book, that the Ethiopians uſed two very different characters. The firſt conſiſted of hieroglyphics, from which thoſe of Egypt were copied; the ſecond we may ſuppoſe to have been a ſyllabical alphabet.

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ſtant merely from habit; but among the Africans, that cuſtom ſeems to have been a phyſical want peculiar to warm climates, where the minds of the common people are extremely weak and impatient. In Europe it is remarked, that women in general are much more eager after predictions than men; while philoſophers, undiſturbed at the idea of what may happen, correct or ſupport bad fortune.

Many natural reaſons explain why oracles have ceaſed in ſome places of ancient Europe and Aſia; but they can never be abandoned in Africa. Two are known at this day on the weſtern coaſt, which are as famous as ever could have been that of Delphi. By an unpardonable ignorance of modern hiſtory, both Van Dale and Fontinelle have been led to admit, in favor of their adverſaries, that all oracles are now really ſilent. This falſity, however, is demonſtrated by the narratives of travellers, who are now living, and particularly by Romer.

When Pliny and Solnus ſay, that ſome cantons of Ethiopia had elected a dog for their king, it can only be underſtood, that they rendered worſhip to that animal, of which we have ſeen many examples among the Egyptians their deſcendants. The information of the ancients concerning the interior of Africa, was certainly more extenſive than ours; but on the other hand the coaſts are much better known to us; and all the nations there, without exception, revere ſerpents. The inhabitants of the kingdom of *Judhac* worſhip one ſpecies, which ſeems to have no noxious qualities; and it is even ſuppoſed to deſtroy

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ſome ſmall black-colored adders, ſaid to be venomous: but other negroes have converted real vipers into *fetiches*, although their bite almoſt invariably occaſions death. In general, the adoration paid to ſerpents is founded on the fear naturally entertained by mankind for thoſe reptiles: ſuch as are dangerous, it is ſuppoſed, ſhould be conciliated; and the others ſeem to merit a peculiar diſtinction, as if a genius, friendly to humanity, had taken care to diſarm them; and this claſs has principally been uſed for prognoſtication. The omens were conſidered favorable when the Iſiac ſerpents taſted the offering, and dragged themſelves ſlowly round the altar. But it muſt be obſerved that ſome of thoſe reptiles attach themſelves like dogs to their maſters, and learn different tricks, which are never after forgotten: thus we may, with ſome certainty, ſuppoſe, that the ſerpents of Iſis were taught to obey the voice or geſtures of the miniſters. The *Gneph*, or divine goodneſs, was repreſented by an innocent adder; and ſtrength or power, by a viper. The prieſts of Ethiopia, as well as thoſe of Egypt, wore the figure of the latter coiled up in their bonnets of ceremony; and we have already had occaſion to obſerve, that the diadem of the Pharaohs was likewiſe ornamented with this emblem*.

The worſhip rendered to ſerpents was not confined to particular towns of Thebais and Delta; for Ælian

* *Sacerdotes Æthiopum et Ægyptiorum gerunt pileos oblongos in vertice umbilicum habentes, et ſerpentibus, quos Aſpides appellant, circumvolutos.* Diod. lib. iv.

assures us, that they were kept in all the temples of Egypt *: this seems the more probable, because it was one of the most ancient, or perhaps the first superstition of the inhabitants of Africa, where the largest adders were carefully collected for the temples of Serapis: some of those brought by the Ethiopians to Alexandria were twenty-five or twenty-six feet in length; but they are found of more than twice that size in Senegal.

The want of documents prevents us from entering into further discussions concerning the particular devotion of the college of Meroé: we know, however, that it terminated in the most fatal manner, from having constantly opposed the progress of despotism—that ancient malady of sovereigns. Ergamenes, the tyrant, who was cotemporary with Ptolemy Philadelphus, and a Greek by origin, is said to have caused all the gymnosophists to be massacred in one day; and this threw that part of Ethiopia into a state of desolation, whence it has never since recovered. Some ruins only are found of *Axum*, *Pselches*, and *Naphthe*, where some years ago the Jews, it was said, intended to form a state independent of the Turks and Abyssinians. This report, however, has not been confirmed; and indeed they are to be considered as not only incapable of executing, but even of meditating such a project, for they know no other heroism than usury.

The philosophers of Ethiopia, like those of Egypt, most probably clothed their knowledge in allego-

* De Nat. Animal. lib x. cap. 31.

ries:

ries: on this muſt have been founded the fable related by Plutarch, concerning ſome towns and villages ſituated near the iſland of Elephantis, which Pharaoh Amaſis promiſed to cede to the king of Ethiopia, if his gymnoſophiſts ſucceeded in explaining certain enigmas. The Ethiopians, he adds, hazarded ſome of their territories on the ſame condition: but although we read other ſuch ſtories in the writings of the amplifier Joſephus, and in the life of Æſop, compoſed by a fool called Planudes; we muſt not be tempted to believe that the ſovereigns of antiquity were ſo eaſily diſpoſed to ſport with their dominions: Egypt in particular was too ſmall to be diſmembered for an enigma, particularly by ſuch good neighbours as the Ethiopians, who never attempted to turn aſide the courſe of the Nile, concerning the poſſibility of which more ſhall be ſaid in the Section on Government.

After what has already been obſerved, it would be ſuperfluous to refute the many different ſyſtems propoſed, ever ſince the days of Iſocrates, on the origin of the worſhip rendered to animals. We find that the Egyptians, inſtead of being the inventors, had brought that cuſtom with them from Ethiopia, where it ſeems to have originated with the ſerpents, and the ſmall bull, ſuppoſed to be the *bubalos* of naturaliſts. This animal, the dwarf of its ſpecies, has horns reſembling thoſe of the moon; and the imagination of the Africans has frequently been ſtruck by ſimilitudes much leſs obvious. The colony of Ethiopians, who took poſſeſſion of the valley of the Lower Nile, in-

ſtead of renouncing, became more than ever attached to ſuch ſuperſtitious practices, when they remarked the utility of the cat, weaſel, ichneumon, ſparrow-hawk, vulture, ſcreech-owl, ſtork, and ibis. It was abſolutely neceſſary to put ſuch animals under the particular protection of the law; otherwiſe the country would have been altogether uninhabitable. The Turks, who do not pretend to be idolaters, are as careful in preventing the ibis from being deſtroyed as the Greeks and Romans. Whatever may be the religion of thoſe who ſhall in future poſſeſs that country, they will always continue to reſpect thoſe animals, ſo juſtly named the purifiers of Egypt.

It has always appeared unaccountable to the ancients, as well as to the moderns, that ſome towns ſhould have adored crocodiles. Cicero is the only perſon who ſuppoſes that this was in conſequence of their utility*; but he would have been much embarraſſed to explain in what conſiſted this advantage, ſo inconceivable to much more able naturaliſts. In the year one thouſand ſeven hundred and ſeventy, having been particularly engaged in ſtudying the topography of Egypt, it firſt occurred to me that Coptos, Arſinoe, and Crocodilopolis the ſecond, the towns moſt remarkable for the adoration of crocodiles, were all ſituated on canals at ſome diſtance from the Nile. Thus by the leaſt negligence in allowing the ditches to be filled up, thoſe animals, from being incapable of going far on dry land, could never have

* *Poſſem de ichneumonum utilitate? de crocodilorum, de felium dicere; ſed nolo eſſe longus.* Cicero de Nat. Deorum, lib. i. cap. 36.

arrived

arrived at thoſe three places, where they were conſidered as the ſymbols of water fit for drinking and watering the fields, as we learn from Ælian, and more particularly in a paſſage of Euſebius*. As long as this worſhip was in vogue, the government might remain aſſured that the ſuperſtitious would not neglect to repair the canals with the greateſt exactneſs. In the ſame manner every dependance could be placed on the Oxyrinchites for preſerving the great canal, now known by the name of *Kalitz il Menhi*, on which depended the arrival, among them, of the ſacred fiſh called *oxyrinchus*. Two other towns, indeed, Crocrodilopolis the third, and Ombos, had likewiſe their crocodiles: Mr. d'Anville heſitates in fixing the poſition of Ombos, but he ſhould have placed it further inland, towards the foot of the Arabic heights, for we know that the inhabitants had dug vaſt ditches for watering their plantations†. It is therefore eaſy to conceive why the people of the Arſinoite Nome, or the province of Feium, had a crocodile called *Suchu*, or the juſt, ornamented with golden ear-rings and bracelets, as we learn from Strabo. That lizard was to them not the emblem of Typhon, as ſome have believed, but of the water on which their exiſtence depended, ſo entirely, that they

* *Per hominem crocodilo impoſitam navem ingredientem; navemque ſignificare motum in humido, crocodilum vero aquam potui aptam.* Euſeb. Præpar. Evan. lib. iii. cap. 11.

† Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. x. cap. 21. The ſituation of Crocodilopolis the third is not known; but from what we know of the other towns, which had the ſame name, it cannot be ſuppoſed to have been on the banks of the Nile.

could not have ſubſiſted ſix months if the canals towards *Illahon* had been neglected. It is probable that the Arſinoites endeavoured to draw ſome auguries from their ſacred crocodiles, relative to the future overflowing of the Nile, becauſe they were ſtill more intereſted in that event than thoſe who lived in the towns along the river.

We have already, in another part of this work, attempted to explain what might have been the object of the worſhip offered to the ſquill, or ſea-onion, by the people of *Peluſium* and *Caſium*, ſome of whom were attacked with a ſwelling of the tympanite kind, and a delirium called *typhomany*, which, as the term denotes, was an Egyptian diſorder. It is ſurpriſing that ſaint Jerome, when ſpeaking of this extenſion of the inteſtines, did not perceive that it produced thoſe effects, which he endeavoured to render ridiculous*. It would certainly have been more reaſonable to pity unfortunate people, labouring under natural infirmities, produced by the fogs of the lake Sirbon, which are ſaid to be no leſs noxious than thoſe of the lake Aſphaltis, or the Dead Sea, particularly during the heat of ſummer. Mr. Pococke, who viſited the latter in April, found himſelf afflicted with a weakneſs of ſtomach, and an exceſſive dizzineſs, from having neglected, as he was told by the people of the country, to uſe ſufficient precaution againſt the vapors. When the Arabs paſs near that vaſt river, where the water is ſo thick that it prevents

* *Taceam de formidoloſo & horribili cepe, & crepitu ventris inflati, q ui Peluſiaca religio eſt.* In Iſai. lib. xii.

animal

animal bodies from ſinking, they cover their mouths, and breathe only through the noſtrils.

Among the ſuperſtitions of the Egyptians, ſome at firſt ſight ſeem unaccountable, ſuch as their devotion to the ſhrew-mouſe: it was revered in the town of *Atribis*, and embalmed after death in a ſepulchre for the purpoſe at *Butos*, although the diſtance between the two places was more than fifty miles. The eyes of that little animal being almoſt as much concealed as thoſe of the mole, Plutarch pretends, that the Egyptians, believing it to be entirely blind, fancied in this ſome ſimilitude to the diminution of light in the waning moon, and to the *Athor*, or the attribute of the Divinity perſonified under that name, which was, in fact, the incomprehenſibility of God, compared with the darkneſs of night and of chaos. But before any ſuch forced and complicated references were invented, ſome much more natural property muſt have been diſcovered in the ſhrew-mouſe. It has always appeared to me that the Egyptians, like the Greek naturaliſts, conſidered that animal as belonging to the claſs of weaſels*, which received equal protection with the ichneumons. The latter, we know, were conſecrated to the Egyptian Hercules, who was the ſame divinity with the Hercules of Thebes, in Beotia; but as Greece pro-

* The Greeks gave the name of *weaſel-mouſe* to the ſhrew-mouſe, becauſe they conceived it partook of the nature of both thoſe animals. This was certainly a more proper term than that of *mus-araneus*, which was uſed by the Latins, for it had ſome reſemblance to the weaſel and none at all to the ſpider.

duced no ichneumons, the Thebans made no difficulty of ſupplying their place with weaſels; and although Greeks, ſays Ælian, they are not leſs ridiculous for adopting ſuch an abſurd devotion*. The inveteracy of the weaſel towards rats and mice made the Egyptians place that animal under the protection of the law; and finding ſomething of a reſemblance, however trifling, in the ſhrew-mouſe, they were led to imagine all the ſymbolical doctrine already mentioned.

Some ſacred animals poſſeſſed only enigmatical and augural properties, in whatever manner they are conſidered: ſuch was the ſcarabee, dedicated to the ſun, and very different from the ugly inſect mentioned by Pliny. From the deſcription given by Orus Apollo, who ſays it reſembles the ſparkling luſtre of the eye of a cat in the dark, we may conclude that the Egyptians had taken, for the ſymbol of the ſun, the great golden ſcarabee, called by ſome the cantharides. This inſect is frequently ſeen in gardens, where it feeds on ants and ſmall worms; when the light falls directly on the ſhield of its wings, it has perfectly the appearance which the Latin tranſlator of Orus Apollo calls, *radiis inſignita*. The other ſcarabees of Egypt were the monoceros, with one horn on its corſelet, and the horn beetle with two, which it ſhuts like pincers. All the ſuperſtitions, relative to theſe three inſects, were conſidered as very ancient; and they appear to have been common to the Ethiopians, and other inhabit-

* *Thebani, quamvis natione Græci, riſu ſunt obruendi; qui muſtellam, ut audio, religioſe colunt.* De Nat. Animal. lib. xii. cap. 5.

ants

ants of Africa, even before Egypt was inhabited *. Some traces of the ſame worſhip are found, not only in the holy cricket of Madagaſcar, but likewiſe among the Hottentots, who, as we read in the General Hiſtory of Travels, look with veneration on the perſons over whom either the ſcarabee with golden rays, or the horn-beetle of the Cape, chances to paſs, becauſe they conſider it as a fortunate omen. What appears ſtill more ſurpriſing is, that the ſame prejudices, with regard to the ſcarabee, have been introduced into Europe, where it is called by the vulgar, the *Fly of the Lord.* This ſuperſtition could not have proceeded from the writings of St. Ambroſe, becauſe they are never read by the common people, who muſt, therefore, be ignorant that he has frequently compared the Meſſiah to a Scarabee, without leaving us even the ſhadow of a conjecture on what ſuch a ſtrange compariſon could be founded. In many places of Europe the ſong of the cricket is likewiſe conſidered as propitious; and many perſiſt in preſerving theſe inſects, although their ſhrill and monotonous noiſe is almoſt inſupportable, when they become very numerous. Whatever may be the devotion of Europeans towards crickets, it does not equal that of the Africans, who make a living by rearing them; and the rich would think themſelves at enmity with heaven, if they did not preſerve whole ſwarms in ovens, conſtructed expreſly for the purpoſe. It ſhould be conſtantly re-

* Scarabees are, even now, ſeen ſculptured on ſtones in the royal ſepulchres of *Biban-el-Moluk.* We have already obſerved that thoſe monuments are more ancient than the pyramids.

membered,

membered, that the minds of the lower claſs of people are liable to be forcibly ſtruck with trifling matters. Not many years ago the French peaſants began to render a kind of religious worſhip to the chryſalis of the catterpillar, found on the great nettle, becauſe they fancied it revealed evident traces of the Divinity. M. des Landes aſſures us, that the curates had even ornamented the altars with theſe maggots; as graſshoppers and canary ſparrows are kept in cages in Spain to ſing during the celebration of maſs*. If the imagination of man can be carried to this point in our temperate climates, can any perſon be ſurpriſed that the Africans, whoſe fancy is exalted by the fire of the atmoſphere, ſhould diſcover ſome reſemblance between the horns of the moon and thoſe of the *bubalos*; or between the horn-beetle and the zodiacal Bull?

In the monuments deſcribed by Montfaucon and Count Caylus, the Egyptian women are ſeen feeding the ſcarabees on tables, or altars. This probably repreſents the real mode of drawing auguries from thoſe inſects, which were treated nearly in the ſame manner with the chickens at Rome, in the ceremony of what Cicero calls, the *tripudium*, and *terripavium*, in his ſecond book on divination. However whimſical thoſe practices may appear, they do not equal the mode invented by the Chineſe for conſulting the tortoiſe, which is one of their greateſt oracles. That ſuperſtition ſurely was not derived from the Egyptians,

* Recueil des differents Traités de Phyſique, and Baretti's Letters on Spain.

for

for the tortoiſe has never been even mentioned among their ſacred animals; yet all attempts to aſcertain exactly the total number, have been hitherto ineffectual; and the reſearches of Mr. Blanchard, inſerted in the ninth volume of the Memoirs of the Academy of Inſcriptions, are altogether imperfect and inconſiſtent. We ſhall, however, indicate here nearly all that can be known of that matter from ancient authors; and, after having ſpoken of the objects of ſymbolical worſhip, we ſhall endeavour to develope the real ſentiments of the Egyptians concerning the eſſence of the Divinity.

In a burgh, ſituated at the northern extremity of the lake Mareotis, a ſacred bull was fed; and although many other towns of Egypt practiſed the ſame devotion, yet the names of Hermonthis, Heliopolis, and Memphis only, are recorded. The reputation of the bull *Apis* eclipſed that of all the others, as ſoon as the court of the kings was transferred to Thebes; but in other reſpects the Egyptians had as great veneration for the environs of Memphis as for thoſe of Abydos. The learned cannot agree on the term fixed for the life of *Apis*: Plutarch pretends that he was drowned at the age of twenty-five years; and this, according to him, agreed with the number of characters contained in the Egyptian alphabet: but Mr. Butter, who ſucceeded in finding out the Egyptian letters, by ſtudying the fillets of the mummies, aſſerts, that they did not exceed twenty-two. It is probable that Apis was deſtroyed as ſoon as his appetite and vigour flagged under the preſſure of age, becauſe in that ſtate he could

not

not give favorable auguries, the only ſervice required of him by the people. It may be preſumed that the *pullarii*, attached to the Roman legions, prevented, in the ſame manner, the ſacred chickens from living beyond a period preſcribed by certain rules of the aruſpices. The Egyptians drew prognoſtics alſo from the voice of children, who ſang and played in the proceſſion of Apis, or at the door of his ſtall. Mr. Jablonſki obſerves, that the oracle of the Jews, known by the name of *Bat-Kol*, or *daughter of the voice*, appears to have been the ſame with that of the children in Egypt, who became prophets before they were men.

Several towns of that extraordinary country, ſuch as Momemphis, Chuſe, and Aphroditopolis, kept ſacred cows; but the common burying-place of thoſe animals was at Atharbechis, whither their bones were brought in boats. Cats received almoſt exactly the ſame treatment; it was unlawful to kill them in any part of the country, and when dead they were buried at Bubaſtus. Bears had likewiſe their ſepulchre, probably at Papremis, a town dedicated to Typhon, or the evil principle, who was ſuppoſed to be calmed by having worſhip rendered to the hippopotamus, the true ſymbol of the typhonic ſpirit. That animal, ſo far from coming at the preſent day to Old Cairo, never deſcends below the cataracts of the Nile, and it was by mere chance that one was taken at Damietta, after having loſt itſelf in following the courſe of the river. In ancient times the race muſt have been much more numerous than at preſent; and we find lions

and

and tygers diminiſhing in the ſame manner. This is likewiſe ſuppoſed to be the caſe with the crocodiles of the Nile, for they certainly never ſhow themſelves now in thoſe places, where Seneca ſays they were very abundant in his time*.

It ſeemed, indeed, as if the Egyptians had intended to make their country the receptacle of beaſts; and yet they did not poſſeſs ſo many different kinds as Cicero intimates. In the firſt place, thoſe uſed for burden, like the dromedary, the camel, and the elephant, were excluded, as well as all ſolipedes; for the horſe was never admitted among the *fetiches*, and the Egyptians always diſcovered a great antipathy to the aſs. This has been aſcribed to its ſkin, which is generally red in that country, where all animals of that color were ſuppoſed to contain the eſſence of ſome diſtemper: in fact, the Egyptians conceived it to be incompatible with a good conſtitution; and although their naturaliſts have been turned into ridicule on that account, even by M. Monteſquieu, their opinion is certainly more and more confirmed, at leaſt with regard to cattle.

It is remarkable that the ſame animals were generally conſecrated in two different towns; as we find to have been the caſe with lions, dogs, rams, and wolves. Ælian pretends that the inhabitants of the great Lycopolitan prefectory took care to pluck up entirely that ſpecies of aconite, vulgarly called *wolf's-bane*, leſt it ſhould injure any of the objects of their

* Nat. Queſt. lib. xiv. cap. 2. It muſt, however, be ſuppoſed that Seneca was well informed.

vene-

veneration. This ſtory, however, is truly ridiculous, when we reflect that the Lycopolitans never permitted the wolves to run at liberty in their provinces: thoſe animals did not exceed in ſize the common houſe-dog, and ſome well-preſerved mummies have proved their characteriſtics to be very different from what they are deſcribed by Herodotus.

The weaſel was revered principally in Thebais; the ichneumon, or the rat of Pharaoh, in the towns of Hercules, ſuppoſed by ſome geographers to have been three; the ſhrew-mouſe at Atribis and Buto; the antelope at Coptos; the buck-goat at Mendes, Thmuis, and probably alſo at Panopolis: the otter, although never tamed, was apparently privileged throughout the whole country. The two towns of Mercury had cynocephali, or papions, which, as well as the monkey Cebus, ſeen in the Babylon of Egypt, about two leagues above Memphis, were brought from Ethiopia.

Epiphanes ſpeaks of a chapel where ravens were fed *; but this muſt have been a tomb near the lake Mæris, which, according to the tradition of the country, contained the body of a bird of that ſpecies, employed by an ancient king in carrying letters. No other conveyance of letters was known in Egypt than by means of pigeons; and the origin of this expedient is loſt in the night of time: we find it mentioned as a very common thing in the verſes of Anacreon, who practiſed that manner of ſending billets, which were no doubt worthy of being

* In Ancot. tom. ii.

carried

carried by the favorite birds of Venus *. It is not amiſs to obſerve here, that the obſervations in Mr. Mallet's work, relative to the cuſtom of employing pigeons in literary correſpondence, is extracted from ſome Arabic authors, who have evidently exaggerated; and their teſtimony beſides is of no weight, with regard to the diſtant periods to which we now allude. Diodorus Siculus informs us, that the government of Egypt ſent letters to every town in the whole kingdom, announcing the increaſe of the Nile—the meaſurement could only take place at the three Nilometers; and as pigeons were ſo numerous, from their being the chief food in times of the plague, it ſeems natural that the Egyptians ſhould have preferred them for conveying ſpeedy information; beſides, it was difficult for thoſe meſſengers to loſe their way there, becauſe, in proportion as they aſcended in the air, they ſaw themſelves ſurrounded by the ſea, and vaſt deſerts of ſand.

Two towns, known by the name of Hieracopolis, fed ſparrow-hawks; but a different ſpecies, brought from Ethiopia, and not hitherto aſcertained by naturaliſts, was conſecrated in the temple of Phylæ. The eagle was revered in Thebais, and the ſcreech-owl at Sais; the vulture, the ibis, the tadorne, the ſtork, and the puet, were univerſally ſacred, although they had no temples; while Arnobus aſſures us, that ſome chapels were dedicated entirely to ſcarabees †.

* Ode ix.

† Arnob. adverſus Gent. lib. i.

The perch, or the fiſh called the variole, was held in great veneration at Latopolis; the carp at Lepidotum, a town of Thebais; the pike at Oxyrinchus; the ſea-bream, or reddiſh-ſparus, at Syene; and the meotis in the iſland Elephantis: but the characteriſtics of the latter are not known, any more than thoſe of the phyſa, which ſeems to have anſwered likewiſe ſome ſuperſtitious purpoſes. The Greeks, however, were greatly miſtaken, when they conſidered the eel, becauſe not eaten by the Egyptians, as belonging to the ſacred fiſhes: many things prohibited by the dietetic regimen muſt not be counted among the number of *fetiches;* but worſhip was certainly paid to ſerpents at Metellis, in Lower Egypt, and probably at Terenuthis. All the temples contained, indeed, different kinds of reptiles, the moſt remarkable of which was the horned adder, revered in ſome parts of Thebais; and, according to all appearances, in the iſland of Elephantis, as well as at a little town called Cnuphis, ſituated towards the twenty-fifth degree.

The hiſtory of the ſacred plants of Egypt has always been very obſcure; and we only know that great veneration was teſtified there for the nymphea, the poppy, the olyra, the papyrus, the ſquill, the abſynth of Tapoſoris; and, as Veſtling ſays, wild muſtard. To theſe were added, the perſea, different kinds of palm-trees, and the acacia, which probably gave riſe to what is ſaid in the hiſtory of Barlaom, relative to a worſhip rendered by the Egyptians

to

to thorns *. This pretended devotion extended probably no further than to adding ſome branches of acaſia, when the firſt fruits of the earth were carried in proceſſion: nothing of that kind was ſeen in the interior of the temples, where ſtatues, or human figures, were very rare; and little elſe was ſeen than ſome animals, a few vaſes filled with the water of the Nile, and lamps never permitted to burn out. By means of the perpetual light in the temple of Jupiter Ammon, ſeveral attempts were made to aſcertain the duration of ſome celeſtial revolutions; but, as the ancients themſelves perceived, they could never produce any advantage.

Such is the enumeration of the fetiches, among which the Egyptians ſought all kinds of ſimilitudes with the ſtars, the moon, the ſun, and the attributes of the Divinity: their objects conſtituted, in general, the ſymbolical worſhip, ſo improperly confounded with idolatry. The Indians, likewiſe, were conſidered in Europe as idolaters, while we had to depend entirely on the aſſertions of miſſionaries and travellers; but their books, when tranſlated, proved how much they had been miſrepreſented. We do not pretend here to ſpeak of the populace of India, for they, like the common people of Egypt, went aſtoniſhingly aſtray; but if ever fanaticiſm was its own puniſhment, it muſt be in the caſe of the Hindoos: they ſubmit

* *Ægyptii coluerunt cattum, et canem, et lupum, et ſimiam, et draconem, et aſpidem. Alii cepas, et allia, et ſpinas.* Ad calcem Oper. Damas.

to the moſt rigid ſorts of penance; but the ſevereſt of all, according to their own confeſſion, is the performance of a pilgrimage to the pagoda of the Great Lama, where they can arrive only by traverſing, during thirteen or fourteen months, the moſt frightful deſerts, at the mercy of the Tartars and beaſts of prey; thoſe, who are more devout than the reſt, continue their journey into Siberia, to viſit the *kutuktus*, or particular biſhops; and thus ſuch wretches are found carrying their proviſions on their backs from Calicut to Selinginſkoi, in the fiftieth degree of north latitude. Until more information is acquired, relative to the motives of theſe prodigious journies, it will be difficult to perſuade me that the religion of Hindoſtan is not derived from that of the Lamas.

However warm climates in general may tend to affect the human heart with ſuperſtition, yet that influence is peculiarly remarkable in Egypt: the prieſts do not ſeem to have had any intereſt to increaſe the perverſe genius of the fanatics; becauſe they poſſeſſed a fixed revenue from lands, which were ceded to farmers at a very trifling rent, and conſequently not ſubject to variation. From this were deducted the ſums neceſſary for repairing the temples, procuring victims, and defraying all the expences of ſacrifice. They ſhould not, therefore, be compared with thoſe infamous vagabonds in Italy, who, borrowing their name and character, begged in the ſtreets of Rome, from the ſecond hour of the day to the eighth, when they returned to ſhut the temple of Iſis. Such con-

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duct would not have been permitted in Egypt among the vileſt claſs of men, much leſs among the prieſts; for no beggars were tolerated by the law.

When the members of the ſacerdotal order enjoy a certain income, and are prohibited from begging, they muſt ſurely be intereſted in maintaining the eſtabliſhed religion, whatever it may be: But no inducements remain for introducing new ſuperſtitions, which muſt appear to them as more dangerous than uſeful.

The partition of lands in Egypt has always been conſidered as an eſſential defect in its political conſtitution. Diodorus pretends, that one third part, amounting to ſix hundred and fifty ſquare leagues, was in poſſeſſion of the ſacerdotal claſs; and as an equal portion belonged to the military, and another to the ſovereign, none remained for the people. Yet this ſtatement could not have been exact; for the conquerors, called the ſhepherd kings, forced the people to give up their lands; and we know that they were afterwards reſtored on the expulſion of thoſe banditti.

No dependance can be placed on the opinions of Herodotus and Diodorus, with regard to the real principles of the government of Egypt. The conſtitution had been certainly changed ever ſince the days of Sethon, who ſpread ſo much confuſion round the throne, that no medium could be found between extreme liberty and exceſſive ſlavery. As all monarchial ſtates have ſome degree of ſplendor under their firſt deſpots, before they ſink into eternal ob-

ſcurity; in the ſame manner did Egypt appear brilliant for an inſtant before its fall.

Mr. Schegel, known by his learned Commentary on the work of the Abbé Banier, ſuppoſes that each Egyptian prieſt poſſeſſed only twelve arouræ, which do not amount to the ſame number of acres. Were our modern biſhops and rulers of monks reduced to the ſame quota, ſo far from riding in their carriages, they would ſcarcely be able to purchaſe ſhoes. Some authors, like Pierius, have ſuppoſed that the laws of Egypt did not permit the ſacerdotal claſs to keep horſes; and the regulation of Moſes might perhaps refer to that particular diſpoſition: but many of the learned are of opinion, that it related only to the climate of Paleſtine, which was peculiarly unfavorable to thoſe quadrupeds. At all events, as his intention was evidently to change a race of ſhepherds into huſbandmen, he acted wiſely in prohibiting horſes; and indeed a more effectual plan could not be deviſed for reforming the morals of the Bedouin Arabs, whoſe high-bred mares are to them what ſhips are to the Algerines.

It muſt be acknowledged, that we are at a loſs to determine the real diviſion of lands in Egypt. By making each portion in the ſacerdotal order amount to twelve arouræ, the ſame inconvenience ariſes as in the military diſtribution, where, according to Herodotus, the quota of the general was not greater than that of the private ſoldier; and this can never be credited. The ſovereign, or the ſtate, had to pay a certain ſum in money or grain to thoſe prieſts who

were

were ſent to Thebes for the adminiſtration of juſtice. From this we may infer that the produce of their lands was not very conſiderable, particularly for married men; and no others, it appears, were ever admitted to the exerciſe of public functions. In this, at leaſt, a few traces are ſeen of what ſome have affected to call the wiſdom of the Egyptians. Their prieſts, beſides being magiſtrates, had the inſpection of the laws, archives, hiſtorical records, public education, compoſition of almanacks, aſtronomical obſervations, ſurveying of lands, meaſurement of the Nile, and, finally, every thing belonging to medicine, ſalubrity of the air, and embalming. Thus, including their wives and children, they amounted perhaps to one ſeventh part of the nation. Very erroneous ideas, concerning that body of men, are formed by thoſe who compare them to the clergy of any country in Europe, where ſeven or eight convents of monks ſometimes poſſeſs more revenues than the whole ſacerdotal order of Egypt. Yet the latter performed continual labors; and being ſubdivided into different claſſes, each had particular occupations. The firſt comprehended the prophets, who preſided at the tribunal, where their deciſion was given without ſpeaking, merely by turning the image of Truth to one or other of the parties. If the repreſentation of a ſuperb monument of Thebais, inſerted in Mr. Pocock's Travels, can be regarded as exact, the judge held that image ſuſpended at the end of a kind of ſceptre, and not hanging to his neck, as is commonly ſuppoſed.

The ancient Greeks had fallen into egregious errors, with regard to the ſignification of the word *prophet*, although it originated in their own language; and Plato took ſome pains to adjuſt their ideas. Thoſe, ſays he, are truly ignorant, who imagine that the prophet predicts future events; for that belongs, continues he, to the *mantis* alone, and he is always a fool, a madman, or a maniac. From this it reſults, as Plato obſerves, that the prophet was nothing more than the interpreter of the prediction, and could not be the author; becauſe it was requiſite for him to be in his proper ſenſes, which was irreconcileable with the ſpirit of prophecy. Thus the miſerable being, qualified with the name of *mantis*, like the Pythia of Delphi, was nothing more than the inſtrument of ſuperſtition; for all depended on thoſe who interpreted the oracle. If we read, that the Pythia ſometimes received money to give favorable anſwers to one town in preference to another, it muſt not be believed that ſhe alone was bribed, but all the troop of ſycophants attached to the oracle of Delphi.

With regard to the Egyptians, Clemens of Alexandria points out poſitively what were the functions of their prophets. It was neceſſary for them to be well verſed in juriſprudence, and to know exactly the whole collection of laws human and divine, inſerted in the ten firſt canonical books, which were ſuppoſed to contain every thing relative to religion. Thus the prophets were not remarkable for being learned in profane ſcience; while the ſacred ſcribes, or hierogrammatiſts,

grammatiſts, from applying themſelves to the ſtudy of hiſtory and natural philoſophy, attracted great conſideration, and were ranked before the aſtronomers and geometricians, or arpedonaptes, who nevertheleſs belonged to the firſt claſs, as well as the hieroſtoliſtes *.

After theſe came the comaſtes, who preſided at public feaſts, the zacores, niocores, and the paſaphores, who took care of the temples, and ornamented the altars, the ſingers, ſpragiſtes, phyſicians, embalmers, and finally, the interpreters. The latter appear to have been the only people capable of ſpeaking a little Greek; for the other prieſts knew nothing but the Egyptian language, which differed very little from that of Ethiopia. During the conqueſt of the ſhepherd kings, it was found impoſſible for thoſe who ſpoke only Arabic, or the Phenician language, to make themſelves underſtood by the Egyptians. This obſervation, as well as many others, tends to prove the error of thoſe who imagine Egypt to have been peopled by Arabs, who had paſſed the ſtrait of Bab-el-Mandel. In that caſe, inſtead of being ſo very different, the Egyptian language muſt have remained a dialect of the Arabic.

With regard to certain monks called *Sanſes* and *Renobotes*, ſaid to have lived in Egypt many centuries

* Aulus Gellius, and Macrobius, attribute great ſkill in anatomy to the Egyptians. They pretend that their prieſts of the firſt claſs were conſecrated by rubbing balm on the ring-finger of the left hand, the vein of which they believed came directly from the heart.

before the exiſtence of Chriſtianity, and even prior to the invaſion of Cambyſes, we may venture to aſſert, that the whole is a fiction; becauſe no ſuch drones are mentioned by any of the Greek authors, who ever wrote concerning Egypt. Neither can we ſuppoſe, that a claſs of men could have remained in that country, who, belonging neither to the clergy, the military, nor the people, muſt have been more expenſive than all the other ſacred animals together. It was in the time of confuſion occaſioned by the deſpotiſm of the Roman emperors, that Egypt firſt became a prey to legions of cenobites; and that plague alone proved more fatal than all thoſe recorded in the annals of the Jews *.

Although Mr. Schmidt has publiſhed a very learned Diſſertation on the prieſts of Egypt, it muſt be remarked, that an eſſential particularity, forming one of their exterior characteriſtics, has eſcaped his attention. They carried, in the ſame manner as the kings, a ſceptre exactly in the form of a plough †. This cuſtom ſeems to have been taken from the ancient gymnoſophiſts of Ethiopia, who aſſerted, that the firſt alimentary grain was found near the cataracts of the Nile; and it is ſaid that a ſpecies of

* The firſt Chriſtian monks of Egypt were called, in the language of the country, *Sarabait*, which ſignifies people diſobedient to the magiſtrates, according to the interpretation of Bochart. The word *Remobotes* is perhaps a corruption of *Remoites*, which ſeems likewiſe to denote factious people.

† *Sacerdotes Ægyptiorum et Æthiopum gerunt ſceptrum in formam aratri factum, quo reges etiam utuntur.* Diod. Sicul. lib. iv.

wild

wild ſpelt really grows in that neighbourhood. The learned have had opportunities of ſeeing frequently the aratriformed ſceptre of the kings and prieſts of Egypt on different monuments, and even in the hands of the mummies, without knowing it to be ſuch. Mr. Cleyton makes it an inſtrument altogether ridiculous *, and Father Kircher, the moſt unfortunate of men in his conjectures on hieroglyphics, ſuppoſes it to be an alpha. Indeed the Theban plough has ſome little reſemblance to the letter A; but he ſhould have perceived that this was not the firſt of the Egyptian characters; for we know that they began by the *thoth*, in honor of the genius who preſided over ſciences. Theſe ſceptres, in the form of a plough, are much leſs diſguſting than the long nails of the Chineſe; and it might appear extraordinary that the Egyptians ſhould have taken from an inſtrument of that kind the chief emblem of royalty and prieſthood, were we not aſſured of the great reſpect they always preſerved for agriculture. Even their gods are repreſented cultivating the earth, and toiling in the fields, according to that allegorical ſtyle which has been the ſource of ſo many fables; and thus Oſiris was ſaid to have conſtructed his own plough, and opened the firſt furrow †.

Egypt contained four choniathim, or celebrated colleges: that of Thebes, where Pythagoras ſtudied;

* Journal from Grand Cairo, written by the Prefetto of Egypt.

† *Primus aratra manu ſolerti fecit Oſiris,*
Et teneram ferro ſolicitavit humum. Tibullus, lib. i.

that

that of Memphis, where Orpheus, Thales, and Democritus are ſaid to have been inſtructed; that of Heliopolis, frequented by Plato and Eudoxus; and finally that of Sais. The legiſlator Solon viſited the laſt, moſt probably with the hope of diſcovering ſome memoirs relative to the town of Athens, which paſſed among the Greeks for a colony founded by the Saites. As this college was leſs ancient than the reſt, it had not the right of ſending deputies to the great council of the nation at Thebes, where ten members from each of the other three, formed the tribunal of thirty, preſided by a prophet, to whom hiſtorians have given the title of Archidicaſtes.

It is difficult to ſay in what manner the Greeks, who ſojourned in Egypt, paſſed their time. Plato ſeems to have tranſacted commercial affairs; and they, in my opinion, intereſted him more than the ſtudy of the ſciences, or the hiſtory of the Egyptians, concerning which he has given us ſcarcely any information, although he reſided thirteen years at Heliopolis and Memphis. Yet the continental voyages of the Greek philoſophers and poets have contributed more than any thing elſe to illuſtrate the hiſtory of that region. Without their aid, and the annals of the Jews, we could have known little of a country, where all the monuments are dumb, and not a ſingle volume remains of the whole library of Thebes.

What Euſebius relates of a college at Alexandria, compoſed of prieſts who were all hermaphrodites, muſt

muſt be conſidered as entirely fabulous*. On the contrary, no perſon, who was born with any remarkable bodily imperfection, could be conſecrated in Egypt; and the very animals, when deformed, were never uſed either for ſacrifice, or in ſymbolical worſhip. Euſebius, pretending to praiſe Conſtantine, places boldly among his greateſt actions the order given by him for ſlaughtering without mercy all thoſe pretended hermaphrodites of Alexandria. Could this account be credited, it muſt increaſe our deteſtation of a monſter who ſhould have been long before tired with aſſaſſination. Nothing could be more abſurd and cruel than to inflict death on women, who were unfortunately condemned by nature to a deformity not uncommon in Egypt; and, fortunately, we find no other eccleſiaſtical writer bearing teſtimony to this pretended murder. Conſtantine, however, acted with very little policy, in removing the portative Nilometer from the place where it was generally kept; and this inflamed ſtill more the minds of the people, becauſe they perceived that he acted in trifling matters from inſtigation. Whether that inſtrument remained in the temple of Serapis, or in a Chriſtian chapel, did not affect in the leaſt the overflowing of the Nile; but his conduct violated extremely thoſe ancient uſages, which ſome nations conſider as their chief riches.

* In Vit. Conſtant. lib. iv. c. 25.—The Greeks of Alexandria profeſſed a worſhip very different from the ancient religion of Egypt.

Conring has been more zealous than any other modern writer in combating the phantom of Egyptian wiſdom. After reducing all the pretended philoſophy of that country to a collection of groſs opinions, he accuſes the very phyſicians of holding a conſtant intercourſe with demons, and of being utterly incapable of curing any diſorder *. From this we may judge that Conring was not the greateſt philoſopher of his age; and by writing ſuch palpable abſurdities, he diſgraced his own judgment more than the reputation of the Egyptians, who had beſides to ſuffer the unjuſt imputation of atheiſm. This muſt be the caſe, it was ſaid, becauſe they give two ſexes to each element, and conclude by their great maxim, that *God is all.* But in fact they never pretended that the elements could produce by their own inherent power alone. On reading attentively what the naturaliſt Seneca ſays on this diſtinction, we perceive that it was merely a vulgar method of expreſſing the difference between fire and light; between vegetable and mineral ſubſtances; between air in a calm and in an agitated ſtate; between freſh and ſalt water †. However ridiculous this may appear at the preſent day, it was far from being ſuch in thoſe

* De Hermetica Medicina, cap. x. & xi.

† *Ægyptii quatuor elementa fecere: deinde ex ſingulis bina, marem et fœminam. Aerem marem judicant, qua venetus eſt: fœminam, qua nebuloſus & iners. Aquam virilem vocant mare; muliebrem, omnem aliam. Ignem vocant maſculum, qua ardet flamma, & fœminam qua lucet innoxius tactu. Terram fortiorem, marem vocant, ſaxa cauteſque; fœminæ nomen aſſignant huic tractabili ad culturam.* Seneca, Nat. Quæſt. lib. iii. cap. 14.

diſtant

diſtant times, when natural philoſophy, like a child beginning to walk, made its firſt efforts to leave the cradle. The Egyptians thought to have done a great deal by perceiving that nature poſſeſſes four elementary ſubſtances. Their ideas on this point were infinitely more rational than thoſe of the Chineſe, who extend the number of elements to five, although they exclude the air; and as their imagination is heated, they pretend that their *hing*, or elements, are animated by five genii, who produce ſucceſſively a dynaſty of Chineſe emperors. Thence, ſays Viſdelou, proceeds that formula ſo common in their books: *Such a dynaſty reigned by the virtue of wood; ſuch another by that of metal, earth, fire, or water.* The yellow color would make us ſuppoſe that the Tartars are now conſidered as belonging to the earth; but Viſdelou aſſures us, that their dynaſty is believed to be produced by the genius of water. From this we may conclude, that the Chineſe are the greateſt metaphyſicians in the world.

The axiom, *God is all*, has in itſelf no preciſe meaning; but, depending on interpretation, may be explained in very oppoſite ſenſes. It ſeems therefore to be very improperly introduced as proving the atheiſm of the Egyptians. Yet all the efforts of Cudworth to juſtify them, although the caſe was not difficult, failed entirely, becauſe he confided too much in thoſe apocryphal works, known by the title of Hermetic Books, which are the confuſed and deſpicable forgeries of ſome Chriſtians. Afterwards he applies to the authority of Jamblichus, who,

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if he even had not been a fool or a viſionary, could never be ſuppoſed to poſſeſs any knowledge of the Egyptian doctrine relative to the eſſence of the Divinity, when he mentions Oſiris as one of the three chief gods, as Cudworth himſelf acknowledges*. This blunder enervated the force of all his other proofs; for Oſiris, ſo far from being in the firſt rank of the gods, did not belong even to the ſecond.

As Warburton believed that the unity of God was announced in the celebration of the myſteries originally inſtituted among the Egyptians, it reſulted of courſe, that they could not be atheiſts. Theſe myſteries became afterwards a branch of finance for the republic of Athens, where the admiſſion was ſo very expenſive, that Apulæus rallies Lucius with having frequented ſuch ceremonies, until he had reduced himſelf to his only robe; and the prieſts adviſed him to part with that likewiſe, to be initiated anew†. This demonſtrates that the work of Apulæus, ſuppoſed by Warburton to be an excellent apo-

* Cudworth, Syſt. Intellec. cap. v. Jambilchus de Myſt. Ægyptiorum, ſect. viii.

† *Poſtremo juſſus, veſte ipſa mea, quamvis parvula diſtrata, ſufficientem corraſi ſummulam, et idipſum præceptum fuerat ſpecialiter.* Met. lib. xi.—This alludes to the myſteries of Oſiris, celebrated at Rome. It is aſtoniſhing that Warburton ſhould have made ſo little difficulty of believing that on thoſe occaſions even women and children were told that Jupiter Capitolinus was nothing more than a deified man, unworthy of their incenſe and victims. It is certain that the Jupiter Optimus Maximus was not by any means a deified man.

logy

logy for the myſteries, was, on the contrary, a ſevere ſatire on thoſe vagabonds, who paſſed themſelves for Egyptians in Greece and Italy, where they were called ironically the terreſtrial ſtars of the great religion. Thoſe villains employed every kind of intrigue and profanation to obtain money from the devout, and they frequently ſucceeded in depriving them of their very clothes. Such was their extreme artifice, that they inſpired the hearts of the common people with fanaticiſm, at the ſame time that they favored all their debaucheries.

It is no longer doubted that the Greek hierophants introduced by degrees great changes into the doctrine of the myſteries of Eleuſinian Ceres. If it be true that, in the time of Cicero, they announced ſecretly all the gods of Paganiſm as deified men, they were greatly miſtaken. But even ſuppoſing that this error was really inculcated among the Greeks, it did not in any way concern the true Egyptians, who never went to Athens to conſult the hierophants concerning any point of their religion, the doctrine of which we ſhall now endeavour to explain. The attributes of the Divinity ſeem indeed to have been perſonified with them, but in a very different ſenſe from that of the Indians, who attach themſelves ſolely to the power of creating, preſerving, and deſtroying, repreſented in the allegorical ſtyle by three diſtinct perſons.

The Egyptians acknowledged an intelligent Being ſeparate from matter, whom they called *Phtha*: this was the founder of the univerſe; the living God, whoſe wiſdom perſonified had the name *Neith*, and

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the appearance of a woman iſſuing from the body of a lion. Thus the Grecian mythology deſcribed Minerva as the offspring of the brain of Jupiter; and little doubt now remains concerning the allegorical identity of *Neith* and *Minerva*. It is not neceſſary here to be very prolix in proving that the ſphinx, the real ſymbol of the Divinity, never could have any reference to the overflowing of the Nile under the zodiacal ſigns of the lion and the virgin. Independently of many other reaſons, it is evident that, in very remote times, the increaſe of the Nile did not take place under thoſe two ſigns, even admitting them to be known to the Egyptians, which is far from being demonſtrated. The zodiac, ſuch as it now appears, is retouched and reformed by the Greeks, although ſufficient traces of its origin remain, to prove that it was invented by the Egyptians. They marked that circle with twelve ſections, and each of theſe being again divided into three, the whole ſubdiviſion amounted to ſix-and-thirty. The zodiac of the Chineſe, called the *yellow band*, has always conſiſted of twenty-four equal ſections; and as each of theſe is likewiſe ſubdivided into three, a totality is produced of two-and-ſeventy.

The doctrine of the Egyptians with regard to *Neith*, or divine wiſdom, may be ſuppoſed nearly the ſame with that contained in the Hebrew parables attributed to Solomon, who had married a woman of Egypt, where many perſons of the female ſex had names derived from Neith, in the ſame manner that Sophia was introduced afterwards.

Divine

Divine goodneſs was the laſt attribute of the Supreme Being, perſonified among the Egyptians by the name of *Cnuph* *, a word famous in the Abraxes. Thus we find this doctrine very different from that of the Indians, with whom the Egyptians had only ſome exterior reſemblance, which vaniſhes in a great meaſure, when ſubmitted to particular examination. But they differ in every thing from the Chineſe, who have peopled nature with genii, without eſtabliſhing among them a proper degree of ſubordination. What has been mentioned here is ſufficient to prove the illuſion of Mr. Jablonſki, when he pretended that the whole Egyptian theology was founded on the ſame hypotheſis advanced by Spinoſa, who, he fancies, muſt have read the Hieroglyphics of Orus Apollo. But ſurely nothing could be found there favorable to his principles; for that Egyptian, born at Phlœnebyth in the Panopolitan prefectory, never ſpeaks of the Divinity but as a Being diſtinct from matter. Yet, unwilling to truſt to my own judgment, where the accuſation was ſo weighty, and the ſubject very obſcure, I conſulted on this point, as well as on many others, my ancient and much-eſteemed friend Mr. Heiming, canon of Cleves. That man, whoſe whole life has been dedicated to ſtudy, and who to great genius joins an amazing knowledge in

* Jamblichus has corrupted this word greatly, and Plutarch writes it *Cneph*, which has ſince been generally adopted. The *Athor* of the Ægyptians ſignified chaos in one ſenſe, and in another the incomprehenſibility of God, and his ſtate prior to creation.

all parts of the ſciences, was of opinion that nothing tends to prove that the ancient Egyptians were even inclined to atheiſm. We do not ſpeak here of the common people, who in no country of the world ever adopted ſuch ſyſtems; becauſe they are connected with a kind of metaphyſics exceedingly complicated, and deſtructive of all ſound philoſophy. Yet we do not pretend to inſinuate, that the Egyptians did not fall into monſtrous ſuperſtitions and errors; for even their very princes were ſilly enough to believe, ſometimes, that they really beheld the gods *. Apparitions of that kind may proceed from a natural phenomenon, not unfrequent in any country, except perhaps under the frozen zone, and conſiſting in a falſe dream ſome inſtants before the real ſleep begins. Perſons in good health, whoſe minds are tranquil, and particularly children of both ſexes, believe then to perceive heads generally without bodies, which move lightly from one place to another. Perhaps no naturaliſt or phyſician has ever examined why thoſe images, preceding ſleep for a few moments, always repreſent heads either of human beings, or ſometimes of large animals. This may, perhaps, be occaſioned by the relaxation of the vital ſpirits, when they begin to calm in the folds and meanders of the brain. The more ardent fanatics of Egypt might have taken

* Hiſtory mentions two Egyptian kings, *Orus* and *Suphis*, who affected to contemplate the gods. The laſt of theſe is ſuppoſed erroneouſly to have been the author of a book called the *Holy Amber*: that production related to judiciary aſtrology, which was much in vogue among the Egyptians.

this

this falſe dream for the apparition of ſome genius, eſpecially as it preſerved conſtantly the ſame form. At this day, the Turkiſh monks, and certain Arabs of that country, have invented a method of procuring viſions. They begin by very long faſtings, and afterwards pray aloud in ſome cavern or obſcure place, until their ſtrength is entirely exhauſted. Thus a ſyncope is produced, during which they imagine that fire iſſues from their eyes, and many phantoms, either agreeable or diſagreeable, dance before them. We can no longer doubt but this method was practiſed by the Chriſtian monks of Ireland on thoſe whom they conducted into a cave called the Purgatory of Saint Patrick; and Mr. Sinner was wrong in ſuppoſing, that it had any reſemblance to the myſteries of Eleuſinian Ceres *. Hunger principally cauſes the delirium of thoſe unfortunate wretches, ſome of whom never recover; and yet we cannot lament their fate.

The diverſity of the ſacred animals of Egypt has made ſome ignorant authors of the preſent day ſuppoſe, that the fundamental principles of religion were not the ſame in the different provinces. But it is eaſy to perceive, that the ſymbolical worſhip was only ſecondary; and that all the animals were conſecrated to the ſame divinities, afterwards introduced among the Greeks and Romans. Yet no perſon could think of aſſerting, that religion varied in dif-

* Eſſay on the Dogma of the Metempſychoſis, and of Purgatory.

ferent quarters of Rome, or of Athens, becauſe he ſaw there the temples of Vulcan, of Jupiter, Minerva, and Apollo, to whom the wolf was particularly conſecrated by the Egyptians*. That animal, however, was not more adored in the Lycopolitan prefectory, than the ſcreech-owl at Athens, the eagle at Rome, the weaſel at Thebes, or the mouſe in Troas.

It might more juſtly have been aſſerted, that the four great colleges of Egypt did not always agree on ſeveral points of hiſtory, natural philoſophy, and aſtronomy: that indeed appears well aſcertained, and from it proceeded thoſe contradictions ſo manifeſt in all the ſyſtems attributed to them by the moderns. Pythagoras, who ſtudied at Thebes, ſeems to have imbibed two opinions compoſing a part of his ſecret doctrine. He maintained, in the firſt place, that the earth was a ſtar, or planet; and, ſecondly, that it moved round the ſun: both which opinions were afterwards taught by his diſciple Philolaus. Another hypotheſis, differing little from that of Tycho-Brahé, had its partiſans likewiſe in Egypt. According to it, the earth was immoveable; but Venus and Mercury were ſaid to turn round the ſun; as we learn from the commentaries of Macrobius on the Dream of Scipio. Although thoſe two ſyſtems ſeem ſomewhat contradictory, it is poſſible that they were admitted by different colleges at the ſame time. Thus all the difficulty is diſſipated, and matters are reduced to this, that as every perſon had the

* Macrob. lib. i. cap. 17.

right

right of thinking as he pleaſed at Thebes, the ſame liberty was claimed at Heliopolis, Sais, and Memphis. If it be aſked again, why Ptolemy rejected the movement of Venus and Mercury round the ſun, in oppoſition to the authority of the prieſts of Egypt; we ſhall only beg to know, why Tycho-Brahé did not adopt the ſyſtem of Copernicus. The ideas of man are frequently inexplicable: he ſees the light, and directs his ſteps towards darkneſs.

Seneca ſuppoſes, without the ſlighteſt proof, that Eudoxus and Conon, during their ſtay in Egypt, had made inquiries into the ſentiments of the colleges relative to the nature and theory of comets, without being able to diſcover any thing. In the firſt place, it is very poſſible that Eudoxus and Conon never once thought of ſuch matters; but ſuppoſing them even zealous in their reſearches, they would probably have found opinions very much divided. Yet the principal points of coſmography were univerſally admitted, and the Egyptians did not diſpute on the cauſe of eclipſes, which they attributed to a ſhade, nor on the form of the earth, believed by them to be round*. If ever any communication had been open between that country and China, the pretended learned in the latter would not have been found, at the arrival of the Jeſuits, making the earth ſquare, and diſcovering ſo great ignorance of the cauſe of eclipſes. They imagined in the firmament, ſays Father Kircher, ſome genius who placed at times

* Diogen. Laër. in Proem.

his right hand on the ſun, and his left on the moon *. Then the drums and kettles were heard beating on every ſide; the moſt timorous concealed themſelves in cellars; and the emperors frequently trembled on their throne.

It is eaſy to believe that, in Egypt, philoſophical opinions never troubled public tranquillity, nor agitated the ſtate; and we have ſhewn likewiſe, that the diverſity of animals, conſecrated to the gods, never occaſioned any diſputes between the different provinces, as long as that country remained under its own civil inſtitutions. But when conquerors introduced new laws, and a police altogether defective, then indeed both hatred and jealouſy began to appear, and the factions of the towns were dreadful. Warburton aſſures us, that hiſtory affords only one inſtance of that kind; but by a little examination he would have found at leaſt four examples, without including the riot occaſioned by that Roman, who had killed a cat, and committed moſt probably ſome other exceſſes againſt the eſtabliſhed cuſtoms of the country. This was highly reſented by the Egyptians, who always willingly riſked their lives to obtain vengeance, and were remarkable for a ſingular obſtinacy in ſupporting torture with patience †. The greateſt torments frequently proved ineffectual in making them reveal a ſecret, or pay the tribute required by

* China Illuſtrata.

† *Ægyptios aiunt patientiſſimè ferre tormenta: & citius mori hominem Ægyptium in quæſtionibus tortum, animatumque veritatem prodere.* Ælian. Hiſt. Diverſ. lib. vi. Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. xxii.

the Romans, to whom they did not conſider themſelves at all indebted. Yet that obſtinacy was extremely different from true courage, and ſtill more, if poſſible, from what is called heroiſm.

Warburton maintains likewiſe, that the combat of the Tentyrites and the pretended Ombites was not the effect of religious diſputes. It did not indeed reſemble the religious wars in France and England, becauſe only one man was ſlain: but yet we diſcover the ſame fanaticiſm, excited through intereſted views, not difficult to be detected, however apparently involved in darkneſs.

The diſputes between the Cynopolitans and Oxyrinchites concerning their dogs and pikes, terminated in open war. The Romans, who had then many regular troops in Egypt, might eaſily have prevented thoſe unfortunate people from proceeding to extremities. But they were allowed to fight, and when weakened by mutual loſſes, they received ſuch cruel chaſtiſements, that nothing ſeemed to them more deſirable than peace. When we ſuppoſe that intereſted motives were probably concealed then under an exterior of religious zeal, it ſhould be obſerved, that this opinion is ſupported by the teſtimony of Mr. Pocock, and other modern travellers, concerning the frequent combats of the Arabs, who now inhabit both banks of the Nile. Such riots among thoſe Mahometans were never occaſioned by the ſacred animals, any more than the quarrels of the ancient Egyptians. Even in Europe, we find frequent enmities ſubſiſting between towns ſituated near each other on oppoſite banks of the ſame river;

they cannot poſſibly be alike flouriſhing, and this inequality of fortune and power irritates the minds of the people. It was owing to the evidently corrupt text of Juvenal, that the falſe opinion prevailed of the Ombites having fought with the Tentyrites about their crocodiles. Tentyrus and Ombos were about one hundred miles diſtant, and therefore not likely to have great intereſts to promote under ſuch vain pretexts. The diſpute alluded to really took place between the Tentyrites and the inhabitants of Coptos. That town became exceedingly flouriſhing, when a way was opened from the centre of Thebais to Berenice; for all the productions of India, Arabia, and the coaſt of Africa, were brought thither on camels, and partly forwarded thence in boats to Alexandria. In this paſſage they had to paſs under the walls of the Tentyrites, who had no ſhare whatever in that commerce, although their ſituation muſt otherwiſe have been very proſperous, as we judge from the ruins ſtill extant of their magnificent temples. Prior to the reign of the Ptolemies, when the Egyptians had no road in Thebais, nor any veſſel on the Arabian Gulph, it was not poſſible to foreſee, that Coptos, ſo far from the Nile, would one day poſſeſs the richeſt commerce in the univerſe. The unexpected good fortune of that town excited the jealouſy of the inhabitants of Tentyrus; and we cannot be ſurpriſed that it produced civil war under the Romans *.

* Juvenal ſays poſitively that this diſpute took place between the inhabitants of Tentyrus and Coptos:

Geſta ſuper calidæ referemus mœnia Copti.

Although

Although the capital towns of the Cynopolitans and Oxyrinchites were upwards of twenty miles diſtant, yet their prefectories either adjoined, or had no other ſeparation than the Nile. Cynopolis ſeems to have poſſeſſed little cultivated country; while Oxyrinchus was exceedingly flouriſhing, and its good fortune withſtood all the dreadful revolutions of Egypt ſince the days of Cambyſes, until the Chriſtian monks at length occaſioned its total ruin. It was ſaid to have contained at one time no leſs than thirty thouſand of both ſexes; but this muſt be conſidered as a groſs exaggeration. The Abbé Fleuri ſhould have exerciſed more criticiſm on what he copied from eccleſiaſtical writers, and particularly from Ruffin, concerning this dreadful ſcourge, which has deſolated Egypt ever ſince the third century. By ſuppoſing that only one fourth of thirty thouſand cenobites inhabited Oxyrinchus, then the metropolis of Heptanomis, the number would have been ſufficient to depopulate the town, and reduce it to a wretched burgh, now ſuppoſed to be called *Bahneſé*.

The firſt monks of Egypt, who replaced the Therapeutes, and copied many of their obſervances, inhabited the deſerts, and labored for their ſuſtenance. In that ſituation they ſhould have been allowed to remain, inſtead of being introduced into towns, where their morals became corrupt, and their begging importunities intolerable. No other means, it would ſeem, could then be found of eſcaping ſuch vexations than by turning monk likewiſe; and thus the monſter, by conſuming its own vitals in proportion

tion as its ſize increaſed, could not avoid deſtruction. Monaſtic orders are never nearer ruin than when they become numerous; becauſe, like edifices without any foundation, although they may eſcape a few ſhocks, they muſt certainly be overturned at laſt.

The Engliſh acted wiſely by not allowing more than one convent to remain in their whole country: but the Turks, who govern Egypt blindly, ſeem to rely on the Arabs entirely for extirpating the monaſteries. It it certain, as Mr. Niebuhr inſinuates, in his *Deſcription of Arabia*, that a remarkable antipathy ſubſiſts between the Bedouins and the monks, who are generally very ill treated, when they fall into the hands of thoſe enemies. They ſuffer frequently ſuch ſieges in their houſes, that they become infected with the leproſy or ſcurvy, like ſailors in long voyages from a ſcarcity of vegetables. At this day, about forty convents ſtill remain without the walls of the towns in Egypt; and their number ſeems to decreaſe in the ſame proportion with the biſhoprics. The latter, according to an ancient Greek catalogue, once amounted to eighty-two *; but they are now reduced to eleven, excluſive of the *Abouna* of Abyſſinia, and another prelate who reſides at Jeruſalem, where his fate is not preferable to that of the other biſhops who remain in Egypt. They are in general obſcure men, and ſo very poor, that they

* This catalogue is indeed held very doubtful, becauſe it calls *Scenæ Mandrorum* a biſhopric. But that place, as well as others ſtill more inconſiderable, really held that rank; and the greater part of the biſhops of Egypt were only vicars.

ſcarcely

ſcarcely live; becauſe the Copts, who do not exceed twenty-five or thirty thouſand families, are incapable of maintaining and clothing them decently. Theſe facts are ſufficient to give ſome idea of the manner in which that unfortunate country is governed by the Turks.

It has been already obſerved, that the revolt of the Egyptians, who attempted to deſtroy the labyrinth, was likewiſe a religious rage of the moſt reprehenſible kind. But that fanaticiſm broke out under the Romans at ſome period between the reign of Auguſtus and that of Veſpaſian, or Titus. Strabo ſpeaks of the labyrinth, as having never received any injury; and Pliny mentions how much it ſuffered from thoſe who inhabited the town of Hercules and its environs. By this we find, that the event took place later than the voyage of Strabo; and nothing but the inclination of the Romans was wanting to have prevented that diſorder.

Some authors, too much prejudiced in favor of ancient Egypt, have vainly endeavoured to juſtify every thing, however vicious or abſurd, appertaining to the worſhip of that country, which was the mother of the arts, and the ſchool of ſuperſtition. According to them, religion in time changes ſo entirely, that even the ſhadow of its primitive form can no longer be diſcovered: but we find, on the contrary, that the great maxim of the Egyptian prieſts was to prevent all innovations in religious matters, and their diſciple Plato imbibed that opinion ſo ſtrongly, that he conceives no greater madneſs than

than to change any thing whatever in public worſhip*. All ceremonies and ſacrifices, ſays he, whether adopted from the ſavages, or introduced by thoſe who conſulted the oracles of Delphi, Dodona, or Ammon, ſhould be allowed to remain preciſely as they are. Similar ideas are diſcovered in the preliminary diſcourſe of Zaleucus and Charondas, as well as in the works of Cicero; and we are therefore led to affirm, that the moſt celebrated legiſlators of antiquity preſerved invariably the ſame ſentiments both in theory and practice. Solon, who reformed the whole republic of Athens, and pointed out even the proper places for bee-hives and water-pits, never mentions a ſingle word concerning the religion of the Athenians†. We cannot conſider, under that point of view, his laws and inſtitutions to diminiſh luxury in burials; and this evil, ſo general in the whole world, ſhould have been repreſſed at Rome by the vigor of the twelve tables: nothing, it is ſaid, muſt more certainly deſtroy the power of the Tartars in China than their funeral expences, if ſome means are not adopted for reſtraining this ſpecies of oſtentation, ſo common to all the ancient Scythians.

Theſe details may ſerve to anſwer the inquiries of thoſe who are aſtoniſhed at finding ſome nations, in former times, uniting the wiſeſt laws with the moſt

* De Legibus, Dial. v.

† Solon is ſaid to have built a temple at Athens to the vulgar Venus, τη παυδημω. The fact however is far from being aſcertained, and we cannot thence conclude that he introduced any reform into religion.

fooliſh

fooliſh religion. The greater part of their religious worſhip had been continued from ſavage life; and civil inſtitutions, on the contrary, could be framed only in a ſtate of civilization. When the maxim was eſtabliſhed of admitting no innovations in ſuch matters, many nations, otherwiſe very poliſhed, continued to obſerve ceremonies invented by barbarians. The legiſlators we have mentioned fell into this error, becauſe they made no diſtinction between the eſſence and mere acceſſory parts of religion: beſides, as the laws rendered them odious to all the vicious, it would not have been prudent to increaſe the danger, by incurring likewiſe the hatred of the ſuperſtitious.

Pharaoh Bocchoris conceived the idea of removing the ſacred bull, called *Mnevis*, from the town of Heliopolis, and by that means he loſt entirely the eſteem of the people, among whom ſuch animals had been worſhipped for a greater length of time than the Roman empire exiſted. *Apis* did not diſappear altogether at Memphis, until the reign of Theodoſius; and, according to Mr. Jablonſki, the firſt had been conſecrated one thouſand one hundred and ſeventy-one years before our preſent era. Thus a regular ſucceſſion had taken place during a period of at leaſt fifteen hundred and fifty years: but we are induced to ſuppoſe it much longer, becauſe Mr. Jablonſki has been guided by the ſentiment of Euſebius, and in ſuch matters that of Manethon ſeems preferable *.

The dietetic regimen of Egypt was wholly relative to climate, and as moſt of the feaſts and ceremonies

* Pantheon Ægyptiac. lib. iv. cap. 2.

were

were connected with agriculture, the overflowing of the Nile, or aſtronomy, the prieſts concluded that their worſhip, like nature itſelf, ſhould be invariable. Beſides, they ſaw the fields well cultivated, while good order and abundance reigned in the towns, and they concluded that a country could never have become ſo flouriſhing with bad religious inſtitutions. But without citing any of the examples before our eyes, it is certain that antiquity preſents a great number of very proſperous ſtates, where the religion was nothing more than a tiſſue of abſurdities and palpable chimeras. In ſuch caſes all the advantages enjoyed by the ſociety ſhould be attributed to the nature of the police and civil laws. It is not however the defective regimen of Egypt which ſhould be blamed; neither do the feaſts relative to agriculture deſerve the animadverſions of philoſophers. Thoſe uſages, reſpectable in every point, are worthy of the higheſt praiſe. But the ſcandalous diſorders committed in the Mendetic Nome; the worſhip of animals in general; the licentiouſneſs introduced in the proceſſions and pilgrimages; the cruel diſcipline of the devotees, and the indecencies permitted at the inſtallation of Apis, excite abhorrence. When we add to theſe, and a thouſand other ſuperſtitions, the exceſſive expences occaſioned by the embalming of certain animals, it is impoſſible not to reprobate the oracle, which declared the Egyptians to be the *wiſeſt of nations*, as Socrates was ſtyled the wiſeſt of mankind. The power of truth may have operated in favor of a philoſopher; but this extravagant praiſe

of

of the Egyptians could only proceed from a ſentiment of gratitude in the Greeks. They did not forget their being indebted to them for the arts and ſciences; and ſcholars are inclined to believe themſelves inferior in knowledge to their maſters, even when they might well diſpute the palm.

All the abuſes we have mentioned prove, that the maxim of permitting no innovation in religious matters was falſe and pernicious; whatever may be advanced in its favor by Plato. The Egyptians at all events might have been allowed to preſerve what was called the weeping worſhip, becauſe gloomy people may require at times to be abandoned to their melancholy: but it was folly to let ſuch men ſcourge themſelves in the temples. Thoſe who get ſo far beyond nature, inſtinct, and reaſon, are capable of any crime, and can never be reſtrained by civil inſtitutions. Thus it is found in Italy, that the proceſſions of flagellants are generally compoſed of the greateſt villains.

The doctrine of the Egyptians concerning the future ſtate of the ſoul appears to have been very complicated. Mr. Moſheim has even ſuppoſed that two opinions entirely oppoſite reigned there *; becauſe he could not reconcile the ſentiments of ancient writers, ſome of whom affirmed that the people adhered to the metempſychoſis, while others denied the fact. But this contradiction, which certainly exiſts among

* Ad Syſtem. Intellect. Cudworth, cap. iv.—Servius, the Commentator of Virgil, attributes likewiſe a ſingular opinion to the Egyptians, which however is evidently falſe.

authors,

authors, did not exiſt among the Egyptians, who do not appear to have ever known in early ages the doctrine of the tranſmigration of ſouls. What we find advanced in the works of Clemens of Alexandria, Diogenes Laertius, Philoſtratus, and the Poemander of the pretended Hermes, originated entirely from Herodotus, who in that point has been greatly deceived. This cannot ſurpriſe us when we perceive the manifeſt errors adopted by the Romans and Greeks in writing on the religion of the Jews, to whom they aſcribed different opinions totally unknown to that nation; and they could not have been actuated by any intention of rendering them odious, becauſe that required no calumny. But their miſrepreſentations proceeded ſolely from the little pains taken by thoſe writers to obtain information; and the Romans in particular were ſo ignorant in ſuch matters, that they neither knew the hiſtory nor dogmas of Judaiſm, even when it was tolerated at Rome. Are we to be perſuaded after this, that a man like Herodotus could not be deceived in writing the religious tenets of the Egyptians; eſpecially as he knew nothing of their language, and had to conſult interpreters, who, on the ſingle article of the pyramids, amuſed him with ſuch lies as can no longer be believed, even by children?

Thoſe who adopt ſtrictly the ſyſtem of the tranſmigration of ſouls, like the Thibetans and Hindoos, take little pains about their dead bodies: they either commit them to the flames or to the earth immediately; while the Ethiopians and Egyptians did

did every thing poſſible for their preſervation. On this account they held the ſea in horror; for thoſe who were drowned had but little chance of being embalmed. Yet as they continued to navigate the Nile, particular prieſts were appointed to drag for the carcaſſes, and convert them into mummies at the public expence. This averſion to the ſea was no inconvenience as long as the Egyptians neither had nor wiſhed to have any fleet; but when other times brought different ſentiments, it became neceſſary to mitigate that opinion, which was alſo adopted inconſiderately by the Greeks and Romans. Prophyry has preſerved a prayer recited for the dead in Egypt*; and it proves to our ſatisfaction that the people of that country neither adhered in the leaſt to the ſyſtem of the metempſychoſis; nor to that of fatality, which excludes all future rewards and puniſhments; nor to that called moral or real, where both are admitted. Plutarch gives us to underſtand clearly that thoſe people were miſtaken who believed that human ſouls paſſed into the bodies of ſacred animals; and that opinion was attributed with as little foundation to the Egyptians, as the adoration of ſwine and aſſes to the Jews. Had the Egyptians thought like the Bramins on all thoſe matters, they would not have fed on the fleſh of animals, nor immolated bulls, calves, goats, ſheep, and many other victims which the Bramins dare not eat, and

* De Abſtinentia ab Animal.

much leſs ſlaughter *. Any act of that nature, beſides future puniſhments, would entail on them the ignominy reſerved for the *poulichis* and the *patiah*, concerning whom we have reaſon to wiſh for more information. Occaſion has already been taken to obſerve how many fables are introduced into the narratives of certain travellers; and leſs acrimony ſhould be teſtified towards thoſe who examine their aſſertions by the aid of ſound criticiſm. Every precaution is certainly neceſſary at this day to prevent Europe from being filled with ſuch falſehoods as thoſe concerning the giants of Magellan. It is however without reaſon that the *poulichis* and *patiah* are ſaid to repreſent in India two Egyptian tribes, called by Herodotus the caſtes of boatmen and ſwine-herds.

The Indians differ exceedingly from the Egyptians by rejecting circumciſion; by admitting a hell in the loweſt part of the *Onderah*; and finally, by believing that endleſs chaſtiſements are reſerved for certain crimes, ſuch as ſuicide and beſtiality †. The Egyptians

* Holwell deſcribes the chaſtiſement reſerved for the Bramins who kill animals, chap. iv.

† Suicide, according to the Indian tenets, is an inexpiable crime, becauſe it interrupts the courſe of tranſmigration. How they can reconcile the conduct of the women who commit themſelves voluntarily to the flames with their religion, is difficult to conceive; for their death is as much ſuicide as that of Calanus and ſome other Bramins mentioned by the ancients.

It has been impoſſible for me to learn what was the doctrine of the Egyptians concerning ſuicide, or how far it was conformable to

tians reprobated the idea of eternal puniſhments, and believed only in purgatory, called in their language *Amenthes*. From that place no road led directly to heaven, and thoſe who entered there had to reſume at a future day their former body, or the matter they had firſt animated. According to the theology of the Egyptians, the philoſophers, and thoſe who had practiſed the moſt rigid virtue, were the only people whoſe ſouls went directly to dwell with God, without paſſing through purgatory, or ever being ſubject to reſurrection. It is proper to obſerve, that in this point alone their dogmas have ſome little affinity with thoſe of the Hindoos.

In the Egyptian ceremonies a public confeſſion was made in the name of ſome dead perſons, declaring that they had conſtantly honored their parents; that they adhered invariably to the religion of the ſtate; that their hearts were never ſullied with a crime, nor their hands tinged with human blood in the midſt of peace; that they had preſerved and religiouſly diſcharged every truſt confided to them; and finally, that during their whole lives they had never given reaſon to any perſon to complain of an injury. All theſe conditions were evidently indiſpenſable for thoſe who hoped to eſcape the *amenthes* or purgatory;

to that of the Greeks. The latter were probably the inventors of the whimſical ceremony of oſcillation, intended to aid the ſouls of thoſe who had hanged themſelves to paſs the Styx. For thi purpoſe ſmall figures were ſuſpended by cords, and kept a long time in motion, to ſerve inſtead of funeral ceremonies, which the religion and the laws refuſed to thoſe who took away their own lives. *O curas hominum!*

and to me it appears obvious that this doctrine on the duties of the man and of the citizen is an extract from what was read in the leſſer myſteries, where it was probably diſplayed on two tables of ſtone. The Greeks aſſure us poſitively that two ſuch tablets were brought before the initiated; and that circumſtance tends to explain numberleſs difficulties.

We are here hiſtorians: our object is only to enumerate the different opinions, without attempting to indicate preciſely how far they were either whimſical or uſeleſs, like that of making ſouls return from *amenthes* to re-inhabit the earth. The uncertainty relative to thoſe who were to reſume their former ſtate, or paſs immediately into heaven, rendered it neceſſary to embalm every perſon through precaution; and Plutarch ſays, that two places in Egypt, near Memphis and Abydos, were preferred to all others for interment. We have already remarked, that mummies, although very common at Memphis, are exceedingly rare towards *Mad-fune*, or the *buried town;* either becauſe a mountain of ruins fruſtrates all attempts to penetrate into the vaults, or elſe the bodies depoſited there are leſs numerous than has been generally believed. *El-Berbi* is properly the place where the famous temple of Abydos once exiſted: but now even the pedeſtals of the columns are removed, and cut into millſtones, by the Turks and Arabs, whoſe paſſion for antiquities extends no further. Mr. Niebuhr, who was ſent into Arabia by the late king of Denmark, pretends to have found a third

third Egyptian burying-ground, ſituated about ſixty miles from a place where the Red Sea can now be paſſed on foot without aſcending above the mid-leg at low water.

It is very remarkable, that ſo many Egyptian monuments ſhould be diſcovered in Arabia Petræa; and Mr. Niebuhr aſſures us that an entire Egyptian town is actually ſeen there, poſſeſſed of lands highly cultivated*, although never mentioned by any hiſtorian. The inhabitants of Heroonopolis might have carried ſome of their mummies about five miles beyond what is called *Gibel-el-Mokateb*, or the hewn mountain. But we have never underſtood that the Egyptians uſed ſepulchral ſtones, ſuch as Mr. Niebuhr calls *Leichenſteine*; neither is any thing of the kind obſerved in the Elyſian fields, nor in the great burying-place between *Sachara* and *Bucharis*, on which the Greeks have ſo ſtrongly exerciſed their imaginations. Cocytus, that formidable river, is now only a little canal, parting from the Nile and Lethe another ſtill leſs conſiderable. The Egyptians, we may ſuppoſe, preferred that place for their ſepulchre, becauſe they wiſhed to be interred near the pyramids. Thoſe monuments, ſo well calculated to embelliſh deſcriptions, and far more important than the ditches of Cocytus and Lethe, have never once been men-

* *So viele ſchone gehanene ſteine kœnnen ihrem urſprung nicht von herum ſtreifenden familien gehabt haben: ſondern muſſen nothwendig von den Einwohnern einer groſſen ſtadt herruhren. Und wenn in dieſer jetze wuſten gegend eine groſſe ſtadt geſtanden hat ſo muſs ſie uberhaupt auch beſſer angebauet geweſen ſeyn.* Beſchrieb. von Arabien.

tioned by the Greek mythologiſts, although the great pyramids on one ſide, and the ſmaller on the other, are ſeen diſtinctly from the Elyſian fields. We muſt not however infer that they were built later than the days of Orpheus and Homer, becauſe thoſe two poets are totally ſilent on the ſubject.

The Egyptians do not appear to have ever poſſeſſed any writings aſcribed to inſpired authors; but the great colleges publiſhed, under the ſanction of *Thoth* or *Hermes*, whatever concerned religion; and neither prieſts nor private perſons ever treated ſuch matters in their own name. All books relative to juriſprudence, hiſtory, and aſtrology, were likewiſe conſidered ſacred, particularly when compiled or calculated by the Pharaohs. Treatiſes on aſtrology, however, were not aſcribed to *Thoth*, but to their real authors, ſuch as *Suchis* and *Piloſtris*; and to *Necepſos*, the great promoter of that ſuperſtition ſo inherent in eaſtern nations *. Kerim-Kan, the conqueror of Perſia, was accompanied in all his expeditions by aſtrologers; and Alexander long before had provided himſelf in Egypt with perſons of that claſs, in the ſame manner that pilots are taken for an unknown coaſt. The ſervices they rendered him by explaining an eclipſe of the moon very remarkable

* Some modern authors have conſidered *Necepſos* as the inventor of judiciary aſtrology, becauſe St. Paulin ſays,

Quique Magos docuit myſteria vana Necepſos.

Apud Auſon. xix. Epiſt.

But as judiciary aſtrology is a folly more ancient than the days of this author, his teſtimony cannot be held concluſive.

in

in ancient hiſtory, were very great, according to Quintus Curtius, but Arrian relates the whole affair in a different manner*.

Clemens of Alexandria has given us the contents of forty-two Hermetic books adopted by the great colleges. The firſt volume was of little importance, becauſe it contained nothing more than the pſalms of the Egyptians; but we have to regret the loſs of the ſecond, where rules of conduct were preſcribed for the kings, concerning which we ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak more fully in the ſequel. Unfortunately even no extracts remain of the eighth and ninth volumes of that collection, treating of coſmography and geography. Some authors have regarded the latter as the favorite ſcience of the Egyptians; and yet their notions concerning it muſt have been reduced to ſome practical rules in compoſing plans or maps. The Chineſe were incapable of performing even ſo much on the arrival of the miſſionaries; for they poſſeſſed nothing more than ſcraps of paper containing ſome characters placed to the north or ſouth of a river, without indicating either the diſtances or relative poſitions of places. The emperor *Can-hi* had to employ Europeans in compoſing maps of his own country, and theſe, after all, were ſo imperfect, that in the year one thouſand ſeven hundred and thirty the latitude of Pe-kin was faulty, and the longitude very uncertain.

Had any treatiſe on coſmogony, written by real Egyptians, been preſerved, we might be able to ſpeak

* Curt. lib. iv. cap. 10. Arrian, lib. iii.

of that matter with more preciſion. In this uncertainty recourſe has been had in vain to the pretended Hymns of Orpheus, the Theogony of Heſiod, and the Fragments of Sanchoniathon. Philo has endeavoured to render Phenicia in general, and particularly the town of Byblos, illuſtrious at the expence of hiſtory and truth, to the former of which he was a ſtranger, and to the latter an enemy. The inventor of the Hymns of Orpheus, the moſt expert of thoſe pſeudonymous writers, has at leaſt preſerved ſome few traces of the Egyptian doctrine, ſo much disfigured by the Greeks, and moſt of all by Plato *. They either did not underſtand the language of that country, or tranſlated badly, and by terms far from being ſynonymous. The ſame thing happened in the beginning of the preſent century with regard to the Chineſe, and we know how many diſputes have ariſen about the real ſignification of the words *Tien* and *Chang-ti*. It was then very ſtrange to ſee a Tartar endeavouring to reconcile all the theologiſts by declaring, in direct contradiction to the deciſion of the pope, that the Chineſe were not idolaters. But we may ſuppoſe that this man would have been much puzzled to explain clearly the nature of idolatry; becauſe, moſt probably, he did not poſſeſs the ſubtilties of thoſe illuſtrious Jewiſh writers, who, like Abravenel, decided poſitively, that the different

* The dialogue between God and Night, ſuppoſed to be written by Orpheus, has at leaſt the ſtyle of the Aſiatics. The Indians have another, far more judicious, where the Divinity is made to converſe with Human Reaſon.

kinds

kinds of idolatry were neither more nor leſs than ten. But in this calculation they ſurely forgot the eleventh, which conſiſts in uſury and clipping money; for who are more idolaters than the avaricious?

It muſt not be believed that the Egyptians ever employed the term *Typhon* to ſignify the evil genius, called in their language *Seth*, *Babi*, or *Papy*, and very different from the *Grigri* of the negroes. Several fables concerning Typhon, who was ſaid to be always connected with an Ethiopian queen named *Azo*, tend to ſuggeſt that this mythological phantom came originally from the ſavages of Ethiopia, who had probably invented ſome rude and noiſy inſtrument to frighten away the *Babi*. In Siberia, along the coaſt of Africa, and in the new world, as far as Terra del Fuego, many nations employ bells, rattles, and drums, or gourds filled with ſtones, againſt the evil ſpirits. The ſavages frequently fancy themſelves beſieged during the night by demons, and on the ſlighteſt indiſpoſition they apply to the exorciſms of jugglers, who always make ſuch a horrible noiſe, that the patient is entirely ſtupified. As the Egyptians have always diſcovered, we will not ſay great conſtancy, but aſtoniſhing obſtinacy in preſerving their ancient religious cuſtoms, we may preſume that the inſtrument uſed by the Ethiopians for driving away the Babi, was really the ſiſtrum, carried by each aſſiſtant in all the Egyptian ceremonies. Bochart has even proved that in very ancient times Egypt was called the *Land of Citherns*, which were

not,

not, as we have already obſerved, ſuch inſtruments as the celebrated muſicians of Alexandria mentioned by Ammianus * could ever employ in their concerts. In the days of Plutarch the lower claſs of people in Egypt continued to believe that the noiſe of the ſiſtrum drove away Typhon†, whoſe power diminiſhed in proportion as reaſon advanced. The ſame thing has happened in every country of the world; for miſchievous ſpirits and hobgoblins are only formidable among ſavages and barbarians. Different monuments in the towns of Apollo and Mercury atteſt that the Egyptians conſidered Typhon as ſubject to the power of the Supreme Being; and the ſacerdotal fables repreſented that monſter as drowned in the lake Sirbon, whither he was thrown headlong, after having been ſtruck with thunder. It ſhould likewiſe be obſerved, that he was always ſuppoſed to poſſeſs more influence on natural effects than in the affections of the human mind. To him were aſcribed the burning winds, ſo noxious in that country, as well as the ſuffocating fogs around Peluſium; and it was he likewiſe who appeared in thoſe water-ſpouts on the Mediterranean, which are ſtill known by his name.

Thus the Egyptians would ſeem to have been much more embarraſſed in explaining the origin of phyſical than of moral evil. It is eaſy to admit that beings ſuppoſed to be born free agents, ſhould ſeek

* *Ne nunc quidem in eadem urbe doctrinæ variæ ſilent. Non apud eos exaruit muſica, nec harmonia conticuit.* Lib. 22.

† *Typhonem clangore ſiſtrorum pelli poſſe credebant.* De Iſid. & Oſirid.

in

in themſelves alone the ſource of vices and of virtues: even the vulgar are capable of conceiving this; but the convulſions of nature, ſo far beyond the power of man, and deſtroying alike the innocent and the guilty, differ greatly in their eyes from that phyſical evil which produces diſorder in the paſſions. After this, it is almoſt incredible to find Mr. Fourmont, in his *Critical Obſervations on the Ancients*, endeavouring ſeriouſly to demonſtrate that the Typhon of the Egyptians was no other than Jacob the patriarch of the Jews *. This chimera alone ſurpaſſes all thoſe of Huet, Kircher, and Warburton. The allegorical fables related by Plutarch ſeem indeed to indicate that the Egyptians conſidered the Hebrews as a wicked and typhonic race. Thoſe allegories however were probably confined to the populace, and not extracted from the books of the prieſts, in which, according to Joſephus, nothing more was found concerning the Jews than that they had been collected in *Avaris*, called likewiſe the *Town of Typhon*. The ſituation of that place is very intereſting for geography, and ſtill more for hiſtory; yet no perſon has hitherto been able to point it out with certainty. In our opinion *Avaris* is the ſame town with Sethron, and its diſtrict formed the leſſer *Land of Goſhen*; for the Jews never inhabited the greater, ſituated forty leagues more to the ſouth, and belonging to a town called *Heracleopolis Magna*; while the little Land of

* Vol. i. lib. ii. cap. 15.

Goſhen

Goſhen formed part of the territory of *Heracleopolis Parva*, or Sethron in the Delta *.

The mythological victory of the gods over Typhon may in one ſenſe be ſuppoſed to refer to the expulſion of the ſhepherd kings, and in another to the draining of Lower Egypt by canals. Prior to that undertaking the country was uninhabitable, and it is eaſy to conceive that the fogs there muſt have been exceedingly pernicious. Independently of the other cauſes already aſſigned, as connected with the origin of the plague, it ſhould be obſerved that the two chains of mountains bordering that country on both ſides from the cataracts of the Nile as far as Cairo, form a long, deep, and narrow valley, where the air cannot circulate freely. Several elbows beſides prevent the wind from following even a longitudinal direction. In the ſame manner, from the narrowneſs and irregularity of the ſtreets of Conſtantinople, the contagion is conſtantly preſerved, becauſe the current of air wants force to diſſipate the noxious particles. The ancients pretended that in Egypt the

* The Egyptian prieſts did not inſert the real names of the uſurpers in their memoirs; but they denoted them by odious ſymbols. Cambyſes was the *poignard*; Ochus, the *aſs*; and the firſt of the ſhepherd kings, *Typhon* or *Seth*. Thus Sethron, where they reſided, had the name of the Town of Typhon, in the ſacerdotal books, although it was properly *Goſen*, or the leſſer city of Hercules. The ſhepherds called it *Avaris*, or *Abaris*; but after their expulſion it received again the name of Sethron or Typhonopolis, which are ſynonymous terms.

wind

wind never deſcended low enough to agitate conſiderably the waters of the Nile; but they ſhould have contented themſelves with ſaying that the veſſels are there ſubject to frequent calms. It is certain that, as Ariſtotle aſſerts, the Nile had formerly but one mouth *: all the others were formed by human induſtry, and increaſed to ſeven, not without ſome affectation of equalling the ſuppoſed number of the planets. But the Tanaitic mouth was never conſecrated, as ſome have believed, to Typhon. The averſion teſtified for Tanais proceeded merely from its having been inhabited by the ſhepherd kings. That place was always expoſed to the incurſions of the Arabs, and at this day a horde of Bedouins feed their cattle in the diſtrict called formerly the Little Land of Goſhen.

As we have aimed at nothing more than to indicate thoſe points in which the religion of ancient Egypt differed eſſentially from that of China, it is not neceſſary to introduce long diſcuſſions on the panegyres, or ſolemn feaſts. They were not ſo numerous as we might be led at firſt to believe, becauſe they were not celebrated by all the provinces at one time; and many are regarded as different, although they may have been eſſentially the ſame.

* Meteor. lib. i. cap. 2.—Ariſtotle believed, that the only natural mouth of the Nile was that of Canopus: but in very ancient times the river diſcharged itſelf at the point of the Delta, about thirty leagues more to the ſouth than Canopus. This appears credible on inſpecting the face of the country.

The feaſt of bludgeons, held in the autumn, was probably no other than that witneſſed by Herodotus at Papremis in the Delta, where the devotees fought with clubs, or poles; but, as he aſſures us, without the loſs of any lives. Thus that folly, however great and reprehenſible, could not be compared with the combats of the gladiators in Italy. The feſtival in the beginning of the dog-days ſeems to have differed little from that of the lamps in the town of Sais; and finally, what the Greeks called *Niloa*, and the Romans the birth-day of Apis, coincided exactly with the feaſt ſolemnized at the ſummer ſolſtice, as we learn poſitively from Heliodorus. Egypt then offered the gayeſt ſpectacle in the whole year; for thoſe who were naturally gloomy and thoughtful made at leaſt great efforts to ſurmount their melancholy. Mr. Niebuhr obſerves, that the modern Egyptians, even when moſt deſirous of appearing joyful, are never ſo in reality. They ſeem indeed to have diſcovered the ſame diſpoſition in former times, although the prieſts neglected nothing to render the theophanies and panegyres ſo very amuſing, that they were called by Ovid the Delights of the Nile. Ancient phyſicians, who preſcribed a voyage to Alexandria for their patients, ſurely did not hope for any advantage from the air of that place; but they were led to expect much from the diverſity of ſtrange objects and public amuſements ſo numerous in Egypt, but too frequently accompanied with the groſſeſt debauchery. Yet, whatever

Juvenal

Juvenal may have advanced *, we cannot believe eaſily that the indigenous inhabitants always carried diſſoluteneſs to ſuch exceſs as the Greeks of Canopus, who ſeem to have been unequalled in the world. Polybius aſſures us, that in his time Alexandria contained no other decent people than the native Egyptians, and they did not amount to one third of the inhabitants. The reſt conſiſted of a mixture of Greeks and Jews joined to the refuſe of all the different countries of Europe and Aſia.

Beſides the ſabbath, which the Egyptians ſeem to have obſerved very regularly, they had a fixed feſtival at each new moon; one at the ſummer, and another at the winter ſolſtice, as well as at the vernal and autumnal equinoxes. All others, except that on the riſing of Sirius, were changeable, and dependent on certain combinations known to the prieſts only, who transferred them arbitrarily, whenever they occurred on the neomenia, the equinox, or the ſolſtice.

No modern author has ever been able to explain why the prieſts of Egypt adhered ſo obſtinately to the uncertain year in matters of religion. They even exacted a dreadful oath from all their kings, previous to inauguration, never to aboliſh the imperfect year, which was too ſhort by five hours, forty-eight minutes, and thirty-ſeven ſeconds †. The Jews, who

* ——— *Horrida ſanè*
Ægyptus; ſed luxuria, quantum ipſe notavi,
Barbaro famoſo non cedit turba Canopo.

† The prieſts of Egypt inſerted an extraordinary day only on each fourth, fixed, or ſacred year.

were

were the worſt aſtronomers in the world, except perhaps the Chineſe, held at times a ſecret council to determine whether or not they ſhould add a month to their lunar year. To this aſſembly neither the king nor the high-prieſt could gain admiſſion, becauſe, as it was the intereſt of the latter to prevent, and of the former to effect, an intercalation, both their votes appeared ſuſpicious *. The ſovereigns of Egypt were probably in the ſame ſituation; and the prieſts did not forget that when five days were at one time added to the year, the Pharaohs, as Plutarch ſays, inſiſted on having one entirely for repoſe. Beſides, the ſacerdotal order pretended to the excluſive right of compoſing the almanacs; and they alone were capable of the taſk, as long as the year remained uncertain. The inconveniencies this occaſioned in civil life were however very trifling; becauſe every thing belonging to agriculture and the overflowing of the Nile was exactly regulated by fixed feaſts, which indicated to the people each new moon, equinox, and ſolſtice. It was from Egypt that Greece and Italy received the only tolerable calendars they poſſeſſed. Lucan repreſents Cæſar, after having ſupped with Cleopatra, as boaſting that the Julian year ſhould cede in nothing to that of Eudoxus †. It is not however very probable that any

* Moſ. Maimonid. de Conſecratione Kalendar. & Ratione Intercalandi.—The kings of Judea might in certain caſes have had an intereſt in making the year conſiſt of thirteen months; and it is right that ſuch matters ſhould not depend on the will of any claſs of men.

† *Nec meus Eudoxi vincetur faſtibus annus.*

man

man ſhould think of ſuch matters at table with Cleopatra: beſides, Eudoxus had ſtudied in Egypt; and as Cæſar employed an Egyptian, he could only value himſelf on his good inclination.

We ſhall terminate this article by ſome obſervations on the pretended zeal of making proſelytes, attributed to the Egyptians. This opinion is founded alone on the numerous temples in different countries where divine worſhip was celebrated according to the Iſiac rites by ſhorn prieſts clad in linen, whoſe probity was very doubtful; but the real Egyptians never took any pains to make proſelytes, and the worſhip of Iſis was propagated in the iſlands of the Archipelago, at Corinth, Tithoræa, and almoſt every town in Italy, by Aſiatic Greeks, who received Neophytes without ſubjecting to circumciſion, although in Egypt that operation was conſidered as indiſpenſable. Some temples of Iſis, like that of Bologna, might have had fixed revenues, becauſe they were founded by Roman families or rich freedmen; but the greater part had only begging prieſts, who knocked at every door with their ſiſtrum, and perſuaded the common people that no crime was ſo enormous as that of refuſing them charity *. This evil ſoon arrived at its height in Italy, where all exertions of the police to check it were ineffectual; for the meaſures taken by the ſenate and the emperors againſt the worſhippers of Iſis were equally abſurd with thoſe they had employed to extirpate the Jews and aſtrologers.

* *Ecquis ita eſt audax, ut limine cogat abire*
Actantem Phariâ tinnula ſiſtra manu? Ovid. de Pont. i.

We do not, however, mean to deny that in the reign of the Ptolomies ſome real Egyptians might have been found both among the vagabonds already mentioned and the Galli; but they were always of the dregs of the people, who, perſecuted at home by poverty, had no other reſource than the credulity and ſuperſtition of mankind.

SECT. VIII.

ON THE RELIGION OF THE CHINESE.

THOSE who have endeavoured to eſtabliſh ſome order among the different religions known in the world ſince its creation to the days of the emperor Auguſtus, have agreed to reduce them to three claſſes: Barbariſm, Scythiſm, and Helleniſm. Without examining here whether or not that circle is ſufficiently extenſive to comprehend every ſpecies and variety, we may obſerve that a particular claſs might well have been allotted for the worſhip introduced into ſavage countries by the Scythians or Tartars. It is now no longer doubtful that the religion of the ancient Chineſe was a branch of Scythiſm, adapted to the character of a rude, reſtleſs, wandering, and paſtoral people: nothing, however, could be more unfit for a peaceable and poliſhed ſociety. Thus the Tartars, even when capable of preſerving their conqueſts, always abandoned their religion, and China for the ſame reaſon adopted the Indian worſhip: yet that country, ſituated at the extremity of our continent, and ſeparated as it were from the reſt of the world, ſhould have adhered more than all others to its national inſtitutions; but they wanted force.

Leibnitz imagined that the *Y-King*, which is, undoubtedly, the moſt ancient monument of the Chineſe, contained the elements of binary arithmetic.

The conjecture, however, of that great man was by far too ingenious; and it is ſurpriſing that he, who

knew the hiſtory of the ancient Germans, ſhould not have perceived that they likewiſe have their *Y-King*.

With them, as well as with the Chineſe, it was nothing more than a table of chances; and we have every reaſon to believe that the ſame ſpecies of divination was practiſed by the Scythians. That of the Chineſe contains ſixty-four marks, compoſed of ſtraight lines, ſome of which are whole and others broken. The perſon who conſults Fortune, throws forty-nine ſmall rods at random on the ground, and their fortuitous poſition, accordingly as it correſponds with the marks of the *Y-King*, indicates good or bad auguries. Confucius, by writing the greater part of the rules for this ſorcery, has injured his reputation irreparably, not only in the eyes of philoſophers, but of all thoſe who can read without prejudice the hiſtory of China. With regard to the Germans, we are informed very minutely by Tacitus of their throwing rods in the ſame manner with the Chineſe *; and we have already had occaſion, in another work, to ſhow that this was the origin of the word *Buchſtaben*, which is ſtill uſed, although in a very different ſenſe.

The mode of throwing the runes, practiſed by the other Scythian nations in the north of Europe, is exactly conformable to what is ſeen in the fourth

* Tacitus ſays, that among the Germans, who were originally Scythians, the prototype of rhabdomancy was engraved on rods; and we ſhall find that the Chineſe alſo ſometimes had rods with inſcriptions.

book of Herodotus *, where we find that the Scythians had no other mode of divination than that employed in the greater part in the pagodas in China. The prototype of rhabdomancy is there fixed againſt a wall †; and Fortune is conſulted in the manner we have deſcribed, without any more relation to binary arithmetic than to algebra. Although Mr. Leibnitz kept up a correſpondence with the Jeſuits of Paris, they never informed him that the *Y-King* was employed by the Chineſe for no other than reprehenſible purpoſes. Had that philoſopher been as well informed as we now are of thoſe matters, he would have changed his opinion; for no perſon was ever leſs inclined to ſeek reality in vain ſuperſtitions. When he undertook to defend the Chineſe againſt certain imputations, he acknowledged candidly that none of their books diſcovered any true notion of the creation of the world ‡. This certainly weakens their deiſm; for thoſe people are far from being

* Herodotus indeed aſſerts that hermaphrodites were found in Scythia, who uſed leaves of trees in divination; but an entire treatiſe would be neceſſary to explain who thoſe men really were, and what was their manner of divination by leaves, which ſeems not to have been unknown to the Chineſe. Many circumſtances relative to the rhabdomancy of the Scythians and Medes are found in Dio. lib. i. Tertiæ Compoſitionis.

† In ſome pagodas theſe rods are flat, about ſix inches long, and covered with characters; others contain different kinds, ſuch as we find deſcribed by Mendoza, Hiſtoria della China, lib. ii. cap. iv.

‡ In his Collection of Letters, and the notes he has added to the Treatiſes of Langobardi and Antoine de St. Marie.

deiſts, who do not admit the Eternal to be the free creator of the univerſe, and, as Newton expreſſes it, the Maſter of Nature.

When Father Merſenne aſſerted in one of his publications that he knew twelve atheiſts in one houſe at Paris, and that the whole number in that city amounted to ſixty thouſand, the police, by ſeizing all the copies of the work, quaſhed this groſs calumny of a begging cenobite who lived at the expenſe of the public; but no ſuch precaution was uſed againſt the treatiſe of *Langobardi*, another monk, who did not accuſe fifty or ſixty thouſand perſons of atheiſm, but the whole claſs of the *literati* in China. An imputation of that nature was too atrocious to proceed from charity; and the more atrocious it was, the ſtronger proofs we ought to have had of its truth: yet nothing was ever leſs clearly demonſtrated. Theſe pretended men of letters are exceedingly ignorant; and when in their diſputes they no longer underſtand each other, which frequently happens, they trace out with their fans the characters of the word intended to be explained. Never, in ſhort, was any language more unfit for metaphyſical diſcuſſions than that of China, and it is called among the neighbouring ſtates the *Tongue of Confuſion*. Rules of grammar and ſyntax, invented to render languages diſtinct and intelligible, are unknown in that jargon; it conſiſts of no more than three tenſes, and about fifteen or ſixteen radical words, not one of which is ſynonimous with God, Creation, or Creator; and the more circumlocutions are introduced, the greater,

of

of courſe, is the perplexity. If, under ſuch circumſtances, ſome of the *literati* ſeem incorrect in their notions concerning the eſſence of the Divinity, it does not follow by any means that they muſt be atheiſts; and their very ſuperſtition argues the contrary. This is explained in the cleareſt manner by the following paſſage extracted from the work of Father du Halde:

"The moſt able of the Chineſe doctors are ignorant in general of all parts of philoſophy, if we except a little morality. They are incapable of reaſoning with any juſtneſs either on natural cauſes and effects, or on the ſoul, the Firſt Being, the ſtate of another life, or the neceſſity of a religion, concerning all which they ſeem very indifferent. No people, however, apply more time to ſtudy than they; but their youth is ſpent in learning to read, and the reſt of their life in fulfilling the duties of their employments, or in compoſing academical diſcourſes. This total ignorance of nature is the reaſon why the moſt common effects of nature are always attributed to ſome evil genius *."

It would be unjuſt to require that ſuch men ſhould ſpeak and write like philoſophers or metaphyſicians; and ſurely, in them, ſuperſtition is more remarkable than atheiſm. Beſides, when it is ſaid that no idea of the creation of the univerſe is found in the Chineſe books, we muſt conſider the aſſertion as limited to thoſe compoſed before the thirteenth century. Under

* Deſcription of China, vol. iii.

the dynasty of the Moguls, some authors, such as *Hou-ping*, spoke of the origin of the world nearly in the same manner as the Mahometans.

Next to the *Y-King*, or table of chances, in the canonical order, some place the *Chou-King*, which is not an original and complete work, but an imperfect collection of historical occurrences, common-place moral sentences, and various superstitions. The compiler of this piece, which deserves the name of a rhapsody more than either the Iliad or Odyssey, is not known; but he evidently lived at a period much later than the events recorded in his work. As the *Chou-King*, it is said, was not compiled until the days of Herodotus, it must always be impossible to ascertain how much has been added or retrenched by those who collected the different pieces; and the whole production appears very doubtful in the eyes of good critics, when they reflect that it was at one time committed to the flames, and afterwards composed anew: yet some traces of antiquity are found there, and it represents the Chinese, like the other Scythians, as much addicted to intoxication with *sampsu*, particularly in the northern provinces, where they first settled. That name is given to a spirit extracted from rice, millet, or wheat, and even from buck-wheat, as some pretend, although that grain must certainly have been brought into China from some other country. The vine is likewise considered as an exotic by travellers, who pretend that it was introduced there since the time of Confucius. This, however, is very uncertain; and we only know that anciently,

anciently, as at preſent, the Chineſe never preſſed any liquor from the grape. Their method of obtaining a ſpirituous drink from rice was nearly ſimilar to that practiſed by the Tartars in diſtilling the milk of mares. The *Chou-King* mentions nothing concerning tea; and we are ignorant of the precautions taken in thoſe days againſt the bad quality of the water. The ancient Troglodytes employed an infuſion of the rhamnus paliurus, which might be very effectual in rendering the bitter waters of Arabia potable, and perhaps its properties in that reſpect are ſuperior to thoſe of the tea-tree.

It is not eaſy to give the reader an idea of the whimſical manner in which ſome matters of natural philoſophy are treated in the *Chou-King*. The compiler not only introduces the five elements, but he aſſerts that each has a particular taſte: thus, according to him, every combuſtible matter is bitter, and every thing ſown and reaped is ſweet; to prove which he ſhould have cited muſtard and coloquintida. It is difficult to conceive how any reſemblance could be found between ſuch abſurdities, and the treatiſe of Ocellus Lucanus, who beſides was a very inconſiſtent reaſoner, as we perceive by his two arguments to prove the eternity of the world. He indeed was not the inventor of that ſyſtem, but no perſon could have defended it more feebly.

The ancient inhabitants of Aſia erred chiefly in what concerned natural philoſophy: But the expreſſions of the *Chou-King* concerning ſorcery are diametrically

trically contrary to common ſenſe; and that the reader may judge, we need only copy one paſſage:

If the grandees, the miniſters, and the people, ſpeak in one manner, and you think otherwiſe, but conformably to the ſigns of the Tortoiſe and the Chi, your advice will ſucceed.

If the grandees and the miniſters are united in ſentiment with the Tortoiſe and the Chi, although you and the people differ from them, every thing will ſucceed equally.

If the people, the Tortoiſe, and the Chi, are unanimous, when you, the grandees, and the miniſters, have another opinion, you may be ſure to ſucceed interiorly, and fail outwardly.

If the Tortoiſe and the Chi oppoſe the counſels of men, it is wiſe to undertake nothing; for evil alone muſt be the conſequence *.

The firſt idea ſuggeſted by this paſſage is, that the compiler of the *Chou-King* was a Chineſe madman. But as the bad cuſtom of interrogating the oracle of Delphi on every ſubject, public and private, did not prevent the Greeks from becoming poliſhed and flouriſhing, neither were any ill effects produced by the ſuperſtitions we have mentioned on the peaſants or artiſts of China. When enlightened princes and able miniſters appeared in that country, they allowed themſelves to be as little impoſed upon by the Tortoiſe as the Roman ſenate by the ſacred chickens, or the Areopagus and Amphyctionic college by the

* Chou-King, part iv. chap. 4.

Pythia.

Pythia. Yet it were to be deſired that the minds of the Chineſe could be diveſted of ſuch chimeras; for although they do not affect materially the body of the ſtate, yet ſtill, among the common people, their effects are frequently melancholy.

In a well-regulated country ſome means might be deviſed of making the blind ſubſiſt without begging or telling fortunes. The multitude of ſuch wretches, who aſk alms in China, is aſtoniſhing; and they have acquired by their fooliſh predictions ſo much influence on the minds of the people, that their agency was employed in propagating the dogmas of the Catholic religion. As long as ſome rich Neophytes paid them bountifully, they continued to recommend baptiſm to all thoſe who applied for their advice on futurity. The government might eaſily prevent the monks from exerciſing their ſorcery with rods in the pagodas; but thoſe who have ſeen the almanacks printed by direction of the pretended Mathematical Tribunal, and filled with the moſt abſurd ſuperſtitions, are convinced that the Chineſe have no inclination to open their eyes on the abuſes which diſhonour them in the eighteenth century.

It would be ſuperfluous to enter into extenſive details concerning the other canonical books, or *Kings*: that called the Spring and Autumn is nothing more than a ſingle chronicle of the princes of *Lon*, and China contained at one time about one hundred and twenty ſuch kingdoms; but diſcord, which nothing can withſtand, ſwept them all away amidſt ſtreams of blood. Thoſe ſmall ſtates waged conti-

nual

nual war with each other, like the Aymans or Tartar hordes; and the manners of the Chineſe were then perfectly ſimilar to thoſe of the Scythians. Even their princes drank out of human ſkulls, after having taken off the ſcalps, in the barbarous manner deſcribed by Herodotus, and ſtill practiſed by the ſavages of North America. The *Chi-King* is a collection of verſes, many of which, according to the confeſſion of the Jeſuits themſelves, are extravagant and impious *. It is, however, curious to obſerve in the *Chi-King* an ode on the Ruin of Mankind, aſcribing that misfortune to a woman, and announcing the ſpeedy deſtruction of the world. This admits of no medium: either the piece has been compoſed at ſome recent period from Rabbinical ideas, or the author, conſidering the Chineſe nation as the whole human race, alludes to the miſtreſs of ſome wicked prince, who, through weakneſs for her, had diſmiſſed the magiſtrates, and given their places to rogues. It is very common with the Chineſe authors to complain of the numerous, but not unexampled, misfortunes occaſioned to the ſtate by the blind paſſion of ſome emperors. Another ode in the *Chi-King* deſcribes the dreadful diſorders introduced by *Pao-ſſe*, the miſtreſs of *Yeou*, a prince conſigned to the execration of all ages, and commonly ſtyled the King of Darkneſs: yet theſe facts do not prevent the *Chi-King* from appearing to be a very doubtful performance, not only on account of the articles rejected by the

* Du Halde, Deſcription of China, vol. ii.

Jeſuits,

Jeſuits, but from the whole collection; and as much may be ſaid of the *Li-ki*. But the paſſion of the Chineſe for the number five made them determined, at all riſks, to have five canonical books to equal their five elements, and five manitons, which, according to them, preſide in different parts of the ſky under the direction of the Supreme Genius. Confucius maintained that the even numbers, two, four, ſix, eight, and ten, were terreſtrial, rude, and imperfect, while the uneven numbers, one, three, five, ſeven, and nine, are celeſtial, particularly the two laſt. It is eaſy to perceive that this prejudice, altogether unworthy of a philoſopher, had infected a great part of Aſiatic and European Scythia many ages perhaps before the birth of Confucius: ſome traces of it are found not only among the Getæ, the Lamas, the Moguls, and the Calmuks, but likewiſe among the ſavages of Siberia. The firſt tribute of furs required from the Samoides by the Ruſſians, under the czar Baſil Ivanowitz, was brought to the receivers diſtributed in nine ſacks. It ſtruck me immediately, when examining ſome inſcriptions found in Lapland, that the ſame myſtic number very frequently occurred in them alſo; and this is not ſurpriſing if the Laplanders are really deſcended from the Calmuks or Huns, as ſome endeavour to prove by analogy of language *.

* The characters found in Lapland are traced in this manner:

IIIXXXIII.†††IIIXXX.

This formula is repeated ſeveral times in different places, and gives always twice the number nine. Knud Leems, Profeſſor der Lappiſchen Sprache, Nachrichten von den Lappen.

What

What is called the ancient religion of China has now no prieſt or clergy, if we except the prince, who unites in his own perſon all the ſacerdotal and imperial authority. Thoſe who form the Tribunal of Rites are neither conſecrated nor capable of offering great ſacrifices; and the emperor at pleaſure orders them to be chaſtiſed like ſlaves, or diſmiſſed entirely, to mingle with the crowd of common men. When the eunuchs governed the empire, the Tribunal of Rites was compoſed entirely of ſuch mutilated wretches as themſelves. Deſpotiſm in fact has overturned prieſthood in China, and trampled it under foot; for, in former times, the Chineſe had certainly their prieſts, as well as all the other nations of Scythia. The Kans indeed always poſſeſſed the right of offering certain ſacrifices, and immolating particular victims, from which they probably were firſt called *Sons of Heaven;* and the title, *Tanjou*, of the Calmuk princes reſembles greatly the *Tien-tſe* preſerved by the emperors of China. All matters of religion were not, however, totally engroſſed by the Kans: thus we find that the Moguls and Mandhuis permitted the *Kutuktus* to retain ſome part of their authority; and they continue to follow the great hordes when they lodge near the tent of the prince. They reſide likewiſe at the court of Pe-kin; becauſe the religion of the Lamas is profeſſed by the Tartars, who, in one thouſand ſix hundred and forty-four, ſubdued China. Many centuries before that conqueſt, the total extinction of the prieſthood had made the Chineſe entruſt the ſuperintendence of public education

tion to the magiſtrates; and ſome modern writers have beſtowed the higheſt encomiums on that meaſure: but as the country contains many different ſects, the magiſtrates of the provinces, having no uniform religion, may eaſily be led to enforce their particular opinions relative to *Fo* and *Lao-kium*. It is truly ridiculous to ſuppoſe that little mandarins are never the dupes of the ſeduction practiſed by the bonzes, who have ſo frequently acquired an aſcendancy over the whole court, and ſometimes to ſuch a pitch, that we find the emperor *Kan-tſou* deſcending from his throne to become a novice in a bonzery. When any country has an uniform worſhip, the beſt method of giving all poſſible force to public inſtruction there would conſiſt in entruſting it alternately to the magiſtrates and the clergy, according to invariable formularies adopted by the ſtate. This would prevent continual and bitter complaints againſt wretched preachers; for they muſt then become all equally good.

China had in former times a high prieſt, called *Tai-che-ling*, whoſe power diminiſhed in proportion as that of the emperor increaſed. This revolution, added to many others, enervated to ſuch a degree the national religion, the dogmas of which were very ill connected, that it became neceſſary to introduce a foreign ſyſtem from India. Unfortunately the newly-adopted worſhip was no longer in its primitive purity; for *Fo* or *Budha*, having blended with it the corrupt doctrine of repoſe and meditation, gave riſe to monkiſm, or rather to that ſcourge, concerning which we ſhall ſpeak more particularly hereafter.

The

The Chineſe would have acted more wiſely by adhering to the ancient miniſtry of their *Tai-che-ling*, than by abandoning themſelves to the lazy and covetous race of the bonzes, who are unconnected with the conſtitution of the ſtate. Whether they beg or poſſeſs lands, ſuperſtition is to them always equally neceſſary; for they find it as effectual in preſerving as in acquiring riches. The Chineſe, prior to the introduction of *Foiſm*, had indeed other monks, who followed the ancient ſect of Immortals: they are mentioned by Herodotus as well as Plato, in whoſe time they were ſcattered in the north of Greece, and thence introduced by the Getæ into Wallachia and Moldavia. It is not aſtoniſhing that the Chineſe ſhould be incapable of inventing a mode of worſhip adapted to the genius and morals of a civilized people; but they made the worſt choice poſſible among all the religions of their neighbours*. In thoſe days the ſuperſtition of the *Parſis* were preferable, particularly for a poor nation, to thoſe of *Foiſm*; becauſe they admitted no monks, and their dogmas were favorable to agriculture. Thus the princes of Aſia, by receiving them into their dominions, had never any cauſe for repentance; and it were to be deſired that the ſame thing could be ſaid of the Jews in Europe, who have the more occaſion to be reformed by others, as they are averſe to it themſelves, and

* Some hiſtorians pretend that the emperor *Ming-ti* was led to introduce the Indian religion into China from an apparition and a prophecy of Confucius. Such fables are too groſs ever to be admitted.

continue

continue to practiſe uſury as in the days of Moſes. Although the Indian worſhip was much corrupted when introduced among the Chineſe, it contained ſtill ſome inſtitutions very proper to correct the natural ferocity of a Scythian people. The innovator *Budha* had not diminiſhed the horror for bloodſhed which characteriſed the dogmas of the Hindoos, who, on that account, are pardoned, or at leaſt not reproached, for many of their ſuperſtitions. The bonzes even endeavoured to aboliſh the puniſhment of death in China, without perceiving that it could never be diſpenſed with in a deſpotic ſtate; for nothing is more variable than the will of princes on a tottering throne. The advice of the bonzes produced ſo little effect, that it did not prevent even the innocent relations of criminals from being conſtantly dragged to the ſcaffold, except the women, who are ſold for ſlaves according to a maxim of the Scythians mentioned by Herodotus *. Some of their colonies brought the ſame cuſtom into Ruſſia, where it ſtill continues.

The ancient religion of China conſiſted chiefly in ſacrifices offered on the hills, whither the emperors repaired with the high prieſt, and both moſt probably immolated victims. In the province of *Chan-tong* is a mountain, called *Tai-chan*, ſuppoſed by ſome of the Chineſe to be the higheſt in their country, and tradition, as well as hiſtory, informs us that its

* *Quos morte rex afficit, eorum ne liberos quidem relinquit; ſed univerſos mares interficit, fœminis nil læſis.* Herod. lib. iv.

ſummit was long appropriated to ſacrifices. What is ſaid of the inſcriptions found there appears very ſuſpicious; though it is not impoſſible but ſome may be found there ſimilar to thoſe prodigious ſtones reared by the Scandinavians on ſeveral high ſpots of northern Europe, and ſometimes engraved with Runic and Laplandiſh characters. The latter are cut on pillars placed on the top of ſome elevated rock, where fragments of bones ſcattered round prove that ſacrifices have been offered there for many years by the Laplanders—a circumſtance which certainly does not weaken the opinion of thoſe who conſider the Laplanders as deſcendants of the Huns; for the place is ſtill known where the latter immolated victims on a mountain in the province of *Chen-ſi*. Other places have been ſeen by travellers in Tartary and Siberia conſecrated to ſimilar religious ceremonies; and they ſeem, indeed, to have been general among the Scythians, to whom the Chineſe undoubtedly owe their origin. The name of their chief prieſt related probably to the ſacrifices on the high places; but the great difficulty is to know what kind of divinities were addreſſed in that manner. The theology of the Chineſe has filled heaven and earth with genii, among whom the Oreades, or thoſe of the mountains, hold a very diſtinguiſhed rank, and ſtill receive divine honors. All the moſt celebrated pagodas of the whole empire are alſo ſituated on the moſt elevated mountains *: men who had neither

* New Memoirs on the preſent State of China, vol. i.

towns

towns nor fortreſſes, and yet, like the ſavages of cold countries, were conſtantly at war, might frequently have found ſafety on the high grounds, after having been defeated in the plains. It was therefore natural that they ſhould chuſe ſuch aſylums for approaching as near as poſſible to heaven to return thanks or invoke future favors. Local divinities were inſenſibly fixed on the mountains, and to them the blood of victims was offered, which had before been reſerved for the ſky. The invention of genii, or the phantoms ſo called, ſeems to have followed the worſhip of the ſtars and the firmament.

When Father le Comte maintained, in his Memoirs, that the Chineſe had honored the Creator in the moſt ancient temple of the univerſe, the Sorbonne, alarmed without reaſon, condemned the aſſertion *. Yet it is difficult to conceive how the Sorbonne could pretend to decide on that point; becauſe it was merely an hiſtorical fact every way unconnected with the religion of France. Hiſtorians and philoſophers ſhould be allowed to judge of ſuch opinions, and then it would have ſoon appeared that the aſſertion of Father le Comte was fabulous, and not heretical. In the moſt diſtant ages the Chineſe had no temples, and they ſacrificed, like the other Scythians of Aſia, on the mountains. As Mr. Leibnitz could not perceive in all their books, written long after they became

* *Cenſura facultatis theolog. Pariſ. lata in propoſitiones excerptas ex libris:* Memoirs on China—Hiſtory of the Edict of the Emperor Can-hi—Letters on the Ceremonies of the Chineſe.

poliſhed, the ſlighteſt trace of the creation of the world, it is eaſy to conceive what muſt have been the ſtate of their ideas while they remained ſavages. Their barbariſm was very great until the year one thouſand one hundred and twenty-two before our era, when a conqueror, called *Vou-vang*, at the head of two or three thouſand men, took poſſeſſion of China: he made ſome laws, and endeavoured to fix the inhabitants, who were ſtill fond of an ambulatory life, and frequently removed whole towns, conſiſting of portable ſheds and tents. Their hiſtorical knowledge was then nothing more than ſome traditions concerning the ancient Kan *Fo-hi*, whoſe mother conceived him miraculouſly; he had no father, according to the mythologiſts of China, who muſt have copied this fable from the Scythians. They likewiſe pretended to be deſcendants of a girl, who brought forth ſupernaturally a child called *Scytha*, according to Diodorus Siculus. Herodotus diſputes her virginity, and ſuſpects her having been connected with Hercules, whoſe name is never mentioned in the fables of the Scythians. Both thoſe authors, however, agree on the monſtrous figure of that woman: her body below the breaſt, ſay they, reſembled a ſerpent; and the Chineſe pretend exactly the ſame thing of *Fo-hi* *.

* Father de Premare, who was indefatigable in his reſearches concerning Chineſe mythology, informs us that an author named *Ven-tſe* pretends that *Fo-hi* had the body of a ſerpent; *with regard to his father*, he adds, *the Chineſe ſay he had none, for his mother conceived him miraculouſly*. Preliminary Diſcourſe to the *Chou-King*.

The

The great analogy between theſe traditions proves that they were taken from one ſource; and if we obſerve beſides the conformity of the emblem of the dragon carried by the Chineſe and Scythians on their ſtandards, little doubt can remain of their having originated from a common ſtock. The firſt flags of the Chineſe emperors, fixed like ſails to their chariots, ſwelled in the wind in the ſame manner with thoſe of the Scythians deſcribed by Arrian *.

It is ſaid that the firſt religious ſymbol invented by the Chineſe was a tripod, or, to ſpeak more intelligibly, a great vaſe ſupported by three feet, and furniſhed with two handles, ſuch as are deſcribed by Homer, or in the verſes attributed to Heſiod. This reſemblance of the Chineſe tripod to that of Delphi can be accounted for only by adopting the tradition ſo common in ancient times, that the temple of Delphi was founded by Scythians, named Hyperboreans. They received that name from inhabiting to the north of the mountains of Thrace, where the ſouthern Greeks had placed the ſource of the wind

* This paſſage is already indicated in the preface; we now inſert the Latin tranſlation:

Signa Scytica ſunt dracones convenienti longitudine pendentes ex contis. Fiunt autem ex pannis inter ſe conſutis, diverſi-coloribus, capite, reliquoque corpore omni ad caudam uſque ſimili ſerpentibus; in ſpeciem maxime formidabilem, quantum poteſt, inſtructo. Utuntur autem his ſophiſmatibus; quando quieti ſtant equi, nil amplius quam pannos videas diverſi-colores ad inferiora dependentes: quando vero currunt, inflati eurgeſcunt in tantum ut ipſas quoque feras ſpecies referant. TACT.

called Boreas; and thus all the little nations beyond Thrace were to them equally Hyperboreans. Others towards the Alps and Pyrenees received alſo that epithet, and it was they who muſt have ſacrificed aſſes, and carried into Greece the firſt olive plants, which were certainly not brought from Sais in the Delta. Even admitting that the Scythians really founded the temple of Delphi, ſaid by Pauſanias to have been at firſt a paltry hut, its worſhip was certainly altered afterwards, and mixed with many Egyptian cuſtoms. The wolf, we find, was conſecrated there to Apollo, exactly as in the great Lycopolitan prefectory in Thebais.

The ancient Chineſe, it appears, were far from being contented with one myſterious vaſe; for, by degrees, they added eight others. To them was attached the fate of the empire, divided at that time into nine provinces, each of which had conſequently its own taliſman. This whimſical ſuperſtition could have originated only from the kettles firſt employed in boiling the victims; and thoſe of the Scythians, we know, reſembled, except in ſize, the bowls of Leſbos. Afterwards the vaſes themſelves were revered, becauſe the genii or manitous, it was ſuppoſed, lodged there to taſte the meat; and the Chineſe, like all the Tartars, offered them the fleſh of horſes. Their other victims were dogs, ſwine, fowls, ſheep, and oxen: but ſuch ſacrifices could no longer be continued when the emperors adhered ſtrictly to the religion of India, which does not, in any caſe, permit

the ſlaughter of animals *. It is only ſince the eſtabliſhment of that worſhip that the Chineſe have ceaſed at times from butchering camels, cows, and horſes; yet the people eat them when they die of old age, or even of diſtempers, as is the caſe every day in Pek-in and Canton, without any meaſures being taken to prevent this abuſe, which is ſufficient to occaſion epidemical diſorders. Extreme want would ſeem to have made them ſurmount the natural averſion of mankind to ſuch food; yet, while famine frequently carries off great part of the populace in the towns of China, the mandarins feaſt on the neſts of certain birds, on the tendons of deer, the fins of ſharks, the feet of bears, Molucca muſhrooms, *ſwalofs*, and every thing they can imagine moſt gratifying to their taſte.

After the conſecration of the nine myſtical tripods, a prince, known by the name of *Vou-ye*, erected another idol repreſenting the genius of the ſky with a human form, as we find in a memoir ſent by Father Amiot to Mr. de Guignes †. This however ſeems little probable, becauſe the ancient Scythians never introduced ſtatues in their religious worſhip; and our ſuſpicions are increaſed by the odd circumſtances he relates concerning that image. According to him, it was an automaton employed to play at cheſs or draughts

* During the reign of the emperor *Kao-tſu* no victims were immolated at the great ſacrifices. That prince ordered figures of paſte to be ſubſtituted for animals; but this cuſtom, ſtill more advantageous for the Chineſe than for the Indians, has ſince been aboliſhed, and butchers are again employed at the ſacrifices.

† Inſerted in the Obſervations on the *Chou-King*.

with diſgraced courtiers; and whenever they failed to win the game, as is generally the caſe, he adds, they are maſſacred immediately. This ridiculous fable is founded perhaps on a cuſtom ſimilar to that mentioned by Herodotus, as practiſed by the Scythians on thoſe who were accuſed of having ſworn falſely by the throne of their king. To be condemned, or acquitted, they forced the augurs to play among themſelves at a kind of divination by lot; and thoſe who loſt were inhumanly put to death, unleſs they all agreed that the perſon was culpable of the falſe oath laid to his charge. Beſides, we perceive in that uſage the immolation of human victims, offered under pretext of prolonging the lives of the kings when ſick; and ſuch is the origin of thoſe acts of ſelf-ſacrifice, of which ſo many examples are cited in the hiſtory of China.

Among thoſe people, properly called *Iſſedons*, ſome of whom inhabit to the ſouth of the Oxus, and others in the country of Igour, animal ſacrifices are performed to anceſtors, and offerings made to the dead. The Chineſe at all periods practiſed the ſame ceremony; and they appear to have had their *mias*, or places where they feed ſouls, prior to their having any temples. That ſuperſtition was an eſſential point of their rites and worſhip; but the great mourning has very wiſely been aboliſhed by the Mandhui Tartars *. It laſted three years, and during that time

* The Tartars have reduced the great mourning to ſeven days; but on their ſide they have fallen into another exceſs, by augmenting the expence of funerals, where they eat and drink like the Scythians, and more particularly like the Getæ and the Iſſedons.

a ſon

a ſon was obliged every day to place rice or fleſh meat before his deceaſed father. No public affairs could be tranſacted by the mourner; and if he had the misfortune to loſe his mother at the ſame time, the ceremony continued for ſix years; and if to this ſucceeded the death of an only child, or an elder brother, the greater part of the perſon's life was ſpent in appearance of ſadneſs and real inaction. Never was any cuſtom more pernicious and irkſome to ſociety, or leſs neceſſary for the dead. Such doleful and fatiguing inſtitutions have influenced ſo ſtrongly the character of the Chineſe, that they are forced againſt their inclination to have recourſe to extravagant tricks of every kind for momentary relief. It is with moral as with phyſical diſorders, contrary qualities ſerve alike in both to promote a cure. This ſingular diſpoſition has by degrees filled the empire with people who cannot be called comedians, for they are really nothing more than rude buffoons, only capable of amuſing men releaſed from ſix years of deep mourning. What the Jeſuits have written concerning the regularity of the Chineſe theatres, has been contradicted by modern travellers, ſuch as Oſbeck and Torten, who are far from eſteeming their farces. M. de Bougainville, after having been preſent at ſome of their repreſentations, while at Batavia, contents himſelf with ſaying, that he never wiſhes to ſee again any thing of the kind *. That judicious writer ſeems to

* "Beſides the principal pieces repreſented on the theatres, each cluſter of houſes in the Chineſe quarter has a kind of ſtage, where

to have obſerved that the Chineſe cannot diſpenſe with their mountebanks; and this neceſſity ariſes, as we have ſaid, from the long duration of their gloomy rites. They were not indeed always exactly the ſame, but the changes which have taken place tended leſs to ſoften than increaſe their ſeverity; for ſuch is the common courſe of ſuperſtition.

In former times no offerings were preſented to the ſmall tablets engraved with the names of the dead: but a child was made to eat and drink in the name of the manes, until he called out *Pas*, I am ſatisfied, and to this the ſacrificer anſwered, *Eat and drink more* *. It is difficult to imagine how a ſtriking reſemblance could be found between this Chineſe infant, and the cuſtom of the Egyptians, who, at the end of their joyous feaſts, introduced the figure of a dead perſon, and ſaid to their gueſts, *Drink and rejoice now, for ſuch muſt ſoon be your fate alſo.* An ancient poet has expreſſed this maxim in a verſe too well known to require repetition. In China we find a funeral ceremony, a ſacrifice, and an interment; while the Egyptians, on the contrary, invited their friends to a great repaſt for amuſement only, as we learn from Herodotus and Plutarch. Neither of thoſe

where pantomimes and farces are played during the fairs. *Bread and public amuſements*, was the cry of the Roman people. *Buffooneries and commerce* are every thing to the Chineſe." Voyage round the World, vol. ii.

* Father du Halde mentions that cuſtom in his *Deſcription of China*; and he was not aware, moſt probably, that it would be adduced as a proof of affinity with the Egyptians.

two

two authors ever thought of inſinuating that the feaſt was celebrated in the preſence of the mummies, or the embalmed bodies of their anceſtors. The dead bodies in Egypt were immediately committed to the vaults, unleſs when ſome impediment took place either from the law, or on the part of the creditors; and a kind of infamy was always attached to thoſe who were prevented from burying their parents. Beſides, no connexion whatever can be diſcerned between a little ſtatue of wood, repreſenting death, and Chineſe children in good health, who ate and drank in the name of the corpſe of their father or mother.

Thus all the conformities hitherto imagined in this matter are of the ſame nature with thoſe which have led Mr. Huet to believe that Moſes was Adonis, or Jacob Typhon, according to Mr. Fourmont; while Croeſe ſees nothing more clearly than that the perſonages in the Bible are the heroes of Homer, and a thouſand circumſtances in his opinion prove, that Ulyſſes and the nymph Calypſo were Lot and his daughters.

What has been already ſaid concerning the religion of the Chineſe is ſufficient to prove, that it differs in every point from that of the Egyptians, and the ſame diſſimilarity is ſo evident in their rites, that nothing but blindneſs and obſtinacy can prevent its being perceived and confuted. No human body has ever been opened in China with the idea of converting it into a mummy; and all practices relative to the art of embalming are there entirely unknown. The dogmas of the two nations, concerning the future

ſtate

ſtate of the ſoul, are equally irreconcilable; for the Chineſe, ſo far from admitting the *amenthes* of the Egyptians, never heard of either purgatory or paradiſe, in all their canonical books or *kings*. On that account ſo many miſſionaries and others have conſtantly conſidered them as diſbelieving the immortality of the ſoul, without reflecting that the offerings made to the dead contradict in the ſtrongeſt manner that opinion. But, in truth, the Chineſe can form no idea of any place of captivity for ſouls; and they ſuppoſe them transformed into manitous, or *kuei-chin*, and preſerving to a certain degree the liberty of rambling *.

We find ſome light thrown on this matter by a ſentence pronounced in China againſt two Jeſuits who preached the dogmas of the Catholic religion, after it had been prohibited by an edict. *Theſe bonzes*, it proceeds, *by inculcating a doctrine containing various points on life, death, paradiſe, hell, and other falſehoods of that nature, have deceived many people. Conformably to the laws of the empire, theſe bonzes have therefore merited death.* On this the grand criminal tribunal marked on the ſentence, *let them be ſtrangled* †.

* We do not ſpeak here of the Chineſe people, who, following the religion of India, believe in the tranſmigration of ſouls, the ſyſtem moſt generally adopted.

The ancient doctrine of China, which ſuppoſes that ſouls become manitous, or *kuei-chin*, excludes entirely future pains and rewards: for theſe manitous are liable to be perſecuted by the bad genii, to whom the Chineſe give a name conveying nearly the ſame idea as our word *demons*.

† This ſentence is extracted from the *Lettres Edifiantes*.

Thoſe

Thoſe, who paſſed this ſanguinary decree, had no experience in human affairs. The Marquis Beccaria obſerves very juſtly, in his Treatiſe on Faults and Penalties, that corporal and painful chaſtiſements ſhould never be inflicted on fanatics, whoſe crime proceeds from pride, and that paſſion is gratified by ſufferings. Infamy and ridicule, according to him, are the only means to be employed with ſuch perſons; but to confine them is perhaps ſtill more effectual.

Thoſe, who pronounced the Chineſe ſentence already cited, conſidered as chimerical the places were ſouls were ſuppoſed to be ſhut up, either for puniſhment or recompence. But they do not explain there in any manner their own opinions, which are neither the ſublimeſt nor the moſt reaſonable. Human ſouls, according to them, are compoſed of two ſubſtances; that by which they feel deſcends to the earth at death; but the other is the ſource of thought, and inhabits the ſky or the middle regions of the air. Thoſe two parts are ſuppoſed to be ſo much affected by the piety and devotion of the ſacrifices to the dead, that they re-unite to partake of the offerings deſtined for their uſe. The viſible aſſiſtants however take care to have the beſt portion, like the Laplanders, who devour the fleſh of the victims, and afterwards preſent the bones to the gods.

This ſtrange ſyſtem cannot be combined in any manner with the doctrine of paradiſe or hell, whence it is impoſſible for ſouls to eſcape ſo readily at the ſight of a plate of rice, or fleſh-meat, offered by the ſuperſtitious. We therefore perceive clearly the real meaning

meaning of the judgment pronounced againſt the two miſſionaries; and it is far from proving, as ſome have hitherto ſo obſtinately maintained, that the Chineſe deny the immortality of the ſoul. Even their men of letters have frequently taken the greateſt pains to raiſe the ſpirit of Confucius, whoſe hiſtory is very obſcure, and conſidered by many learned men as nothing more than a collection of Chineſe fables, to which ſilly miſſionaries have added their own. Father Martini relates ſeriouſly, that one day it was told to this pretended philoſopher, that the hunters had killed a very uncommon animal, ſomewhat reſembling a lamb: on this he began to weep bitterly, exclaiming in his great grief, that he now foreſaw the ſhort duration of his doctrine. This lamb, as we perceive, muſt have been a monſter produced in the brain of ſome miſſionary: but even the diſciples of Confucius are ſaid to atteſt that the ghoſt of a man named *Tcheou-kong*, who was then dead upwards of ſix hundred years, appeared every night to their maſter. His mind ſeems beſides to have been ſtrongly infected with numerous ſuperſtitions concerning ſorcery, or divination with rods, as we ſee by his interpretation of the fable of the *Y-king*, which bears more ſigns of authenticity than any other of his ſuppoſed productions.

It is neceſſary here to ſtate as clearly as poſſible the expreſſions of Mr. Viſdelou, becauſe they are of the utmoſt importance, and ſeem altogether deciſive.

Confucius not only approved of ſorcery, but even taught in expreſs terms how to obtain predictions; and certainly

certainly that practice has proceeded entirely from his suggestions in the Commentary on the Y-king. Besides, Tso-kieou-ming, a disciple of Confucius, whose lessons he copied in his Commentaries on the Canonical Annals, has inserted so many examples of sorcery that they are disgusting. Events there correspond so exactly with predictions, that, if he is to be believed, they were really so many miracles. All the Chinese philosophers until this day use such spells, by means of which they pretend to be capable of predicting every thing. In short, they all adhere to the Book of Fortune.*

Mr. Visdelou, who has furnished us with these explications, was much better versed in the Chinese language and literature than Father Gaubil, who could not translate the *Chou-King*, without the assistance of a Tartan copy. Visdelou, on the contrary, received an imperial certificate, acknowledging him to be a very learned man†; and as he could read the Chinese characters fluently, his testimony is here very material. It was only from adopting the common cant of other writers, that he gave the name of philosophers to the literati in China, who, corrupted by the doctrine of Confucius, pretend to prophesy through rhabdomancy. The gross superstitions of

* Notice of the *Y-king*.

† The imperial certificate, given to Mr. Visdelou, was a piece of satin containing these words: "We acknowledge that this man, who comes from Europe, is higher in the knowledge and science of our Chinese characters than the clouds above our heads, and that he is more profound in euridition and penetration, than the abysses over which we walk." This silly jargon signified nothing else than that the bearer knew how to read and write the Chinese language.

those

thoſe men betray ſo much weakneſs and ignorance, that they cannot be excuſed, even in the eyes of thoſe who have carried their prepoſſeſſions to the greateſt length in favor of China. Mr. de Guignes, having quoted a paſſage of Euſebius, concerning the inhabitants of Sericum, adds, that the eulogy given of thoſe people was exaggeration, *in the ſame manner*, continues he, *that we now beſtow ſo many extravagant encomiums on the Chineſe*. The loſs of time is not the only injury the reader has to ſuffer from hiſtorical fables, which are the ſource of frequent errors, although ſometimes not more conſiſtent than the dreams of thoſe who ſleep in peace. Nothing however can diſhearten me in citing facts, and pointing out conſequences; becauſe that method alone can diſpel all the falſe ideas, introduced into Europe concerning the Chineſe by ſo many travellers, from Marc Paul down to Father Bouvet. The latter wrote a panegyric on the emperor *Can-hi* in the legendary ſtyle, and compoſed of nearly the ſame ſtuff with the account given by Martini of Confucius, who repeated inceſſantly, ſays he, *that a ſaint would appear in the Weſt* *. If we are to believe ſome hiſtorians, who write like children, thoſe words produced very wonderful conſequences, by ſerving to introduce the religion of India into China. Thoſe, however, who

* Martini, Hiſt. Sinenſis, lib. iv. *Kia-yu* is a kind of hiſtory of Confucius, which even the literati of China conſider as a mere romance. Yet we could wiſh to have it tranſlated, in order to ſee how far it ſuggeſted thoſe prodigies, which the miſſionaries relate concerning Confucius.

examined

examined better the ſtate of things, have perceived that a new worſhip, more connected than that of the ancient ſavages of Scythia, became indiſpenſably neceſſary in China. At all events thoſe miſſionaries cannot be juſtified, who diſhonored their judgment and profeſſion by maintaining, that Confucius propheſied the coming of the Meſſiah, by the table of fortune and his magical rods *.

By ſuppoſing for an inſtant, that the words attributed to Confucius were really his, the true meaning could only be traced to the converſation he is ſaid to have held with *Lao-kium*, who travelled, it would appear, in India and Thibet, where he muſt have ſeen the grand lama. What we call at this day the ſect of *Lao-kium* is nothing but the lamic worſhip ſomewhat diſfigured, or the ſect of the immortals mentioned by ſeveral Greek authors. They tell us, that, in their time, among the Thracians and Scythians, monaſtic orders, or religious congregations, were formed by people who never married, and in fact differed nothing from the bonzes of *Lao-kium*, generally called *Tao-ſſe*, or the immortals.

Thus the pretented ſaint, believed by Confucius to be in the Weſt, was ſome celebrated fakir of India, or the grand lama himſelf. It is not probable that

* Father Couplet certainly intended to denote the Meſſiah in his book on the Chineſe Sciences, where he makes Confucius uſe the following words: *Expectandum eſt quoad veniat ejuſmodi vir ſummè ſanctus; ac tum demum ſperari poteſt ut adeo excellens virtus illo duce ac magiſtro in actum prodeat.* Such abſurdities do not deſerve to be conſidered ſeriouſly.

he ſhould have alluded to any of thoſe perſonages called in Europe the Scythian philoſophers, ſuch as *Zamoixes*, *Zeutos*, *Abaris*, *Diceneus*, and *Taxoras*. *Anacharſis* ſeems to have been later, if it be true that he was cotemporary with Solon, and even with Confucius, whoſe chief maxims are certainly very ſimilar to what Stanley, in his collection, attributes to Anacharſis *. The other philoſophers of Scythia are little known; and we only underſtand that they taught morality, and the cultivation of ſome alimentary grains which grew wild in their country. Many plants of that kind are ſtill found in a natural ſtate between the fortieth and fifty-ſecond degree of north latitude on our ancient continent. The origin of agriculture among the Scythians was enveloped in various fables; and thoſe who inhabited near the Boriſthenes contented themſelves with ſaying, that one day a golden plough fell from heaven into their country. This fiction is not difficult to be interpreted, and it diſcovers more ingenuity than the great golden chain of the Grecian mythologiſts.

According to ſome diſcoveries, the name of Confucius did not become very celebrated in China until about twelve hundred years after the reputed time of his birth. It was in the eighth century of our era, that the emperor *Hiven-tſong* gave him the name

* Hiſt. Philoſ. part i. *Anacharſis* recommended moderation, which amounted nearly to the *perfect medium* of Confucius. The ſame thing has been ſaid by the men of every country; and beſides, the maxims generally attributed to *Anacharſis*, were perhaps compoſed by ſome other perſon.

of

of *King of Letters*; but he loſt that vain and bombaſtic title under the dynaſty of *Ming* *. From this we might be led to believe that the emperor *Hiven-tſong* was a well-informed and equitable prince, who wiſhed to honor merit and encourage virtue. But, on the contrary, he embrued his hands in the blood of his own children, and diſcovered himſelf to be vile and deſpicable in every thing. He was notoriouſly addicted to the ſuperſtition of *Tao-ſſe*, and governed by eunuchs, who filled the empire with robbers, and occaſioned the moſt dreadful exceſſes.

It is not improbable that about this time of fanatiſm and trouble the religious worſhip of Confucius became predominant in ſome provinces, while in others it was entirely unknown. At leaſt the Arabs, who then travelled into China, do not ſeem to have had much information concerning it; and they tell us poſitively, that the Chineſe had not begun to apply themſelves to the ſciences, and that they were much inferior to the Indians †. This is really true, even at the preſent moment, as far as it concerns aſtronomy; for the Bramins in our days have determined with ſome exactneſs the time when Venus was to paſs the diſc of the ſun; which is more than any of the literati of China were capable of do-

* Confucius was diveſted of this title about the year 1384; and ſome hiſtorians believe that he was not called *King of Letters*, until he received that name in the year 952, from the emperor *Tai-tſou*.

† Ancient Accounts of India and China, publiſhed by Renaudot.

ing. Neither did that country, as the Arabs juſtly obſerved, begin to have ſchools; and about the year one thouſand three hundred and eighty-four of our era, they were firſt built by the emperor *Taeſſu*, founder of the dynaſty of *Ming*. That adventurer, a man of low birth, who had been cook or ſervant in a convent of monks, then thief, and afterwards a leader of banditti, ended his career by becoming one of the greateſt princes ever known in China. But the colleges which he erected ſoon fell into ruins, and the revenues attached to them were likewiſe diſſipated, as we learn from a Chineſe author who wrote under the preſent dynaſty of the Mandhui Tartars. After having ſtated ſeveral cauſes of that ſhameful decline, he adds, that *the wiſe regulations of the emperor Taeſſu, for eſtabliſhing ſchools in the country as well as in the towns, were very much neglected;* and Father Trigault aſſures us, that not one remained when he viſited China †.

The novelty of the religious worſhip paid to Confucius is apparent from its ceremonies, as well as the form of the ſacred veſſels employed therein, and the ornaments of the tabernacle and altar. All theſe things are copied after the ritual of the Indian pago-

† Expedit. apud Sinas, lib. i. Nieuhof algemeene Beſchryving van't Ryk Sina. The want of public ſchools makes it neceſſary to employ private maſters; and the Chineſe author we have cited obſerves very juſtly, that the poor cannot afford the expence. Ignorance is therefore perpetuated in ſuch families; and the rich alone are in poſſeſſion of thoſe places which require a certain knowledge of the characters and canonical books.

das,

das, and the practices of the bonzes of *Fo*, except perhaps the immolation of animals. The latter seems to have been introduced by the men of letters themselves, as well as the childish custom of proving the victims with warm wine.

It would be useless to examine here whether or not the Jesuits in China approved of the solemn sacrifices offered to Confucius during the equinoxes; but they certainly condemned them highly in Europe. The reason they assigned was their marked affinity with the superstitions of India, which could not be tolerated, says Father le Comte, without scandal, and danger of subversion *. Whence it necessarily follows, that, previous to the establishment of the Indian religion in China, the worship of Confucius was very far from being the same as now; and no traces of it are found in any age anterior to our era. Some even pretend, that the emperor *Schi-chuan-di* committed to the flames all the works of this man, who wrote, or rather etched, on pieces of wood filed together on cords. Those shingles must have loaded several carts, had they contained all the writings now published in the name of Confucius. Yet nothing tends to prove that he is the author even of the *Tchun-tscieou*, or *Spring and Autumn*, the shortest and most interesting of all his supposed productions. It is placed among the number of the *kings*; but no person knows with

* The Jesuits condemned the solemn sacrifices made to Confucius; and they approved of others less solemn. Responsum Episcopi Beritensis ad Cardinalem Marescottum, &c.

any certainty by whom that chronicle was compiled *.

We have already obſerved, with regard to the burning of the books by *Schi-chuan-di*, that the fact was not only doubted by ſome critics, but even the motives aſſigned for it ſeem inſufficient. The barbarian, it is ſaid, was mortified by the praiſes beſtowed on monarchs who were dead upwards of one thouſand years. It would be exactly the ſame thing to repreſent the king of Spain as envious of the panegyrics invented by ſome fools in Caſtile for Tubal Cain; who having paſſed the Straits of Gibraltar on his anvil, reigned gloriouſly over all the countries beyond the Pyrenees; and his name is ſtill inſerted as the firſt of the Spaniſh kings.

Others pretend, that *Schi-chuan-di* cauſed all the writings of Confucius to be deſtroyed, becauſe he thought they favored feudal government, which is the worſt of all, except deſpotiſm. But perhaps in the whole world no works can be found more calculated for arbitrary ſway than thoſe publiſhed in his name. They require a blind ſubmiſſion to the caprices of the prince, without condemning paternal power degenerated into tyranny or political ſlavery, perſonal ſervitude, polygamy, confinement of women, or the cuſtom of ſelling children. Thus, ſo far from having any juſt notions of morality, he was ignorant of all the principles of natural right; or elſe thoſe who

* Some of the Chineſe literati do not count this chronicle among the canonical books, but merely as little fragments of the *Yo-king*.

forged

forged his ſuppoſed books, were ſuch wretched compilers, that, as Thomaſius obſerves, it is impoſſible to read ſome paſſages ſeriouſly *. The many common-place maxims they contain required no extent of genius; for moral ſentences of the ſame kind have been common among all the nations of the ancient continent, if we except ſome few hordes of men, who, little better than ſavages, conducted themſelves chiefly by inſtinct. But the morality of the Chineſe is entirely ſpeculative, and their diſhoneſty in commerce ſo great, that no gold or ſilver money can be truſted in their hands, and they adulterate even that of copper.

When the diſputes in Europe concerning the ceremonies of China, were conducted with that atrocious fury called theological hatred, which changes men into tygers, it was aſſerted that the literati in China were atheiſts in theory, and idolaters in practice. Yet the mind of man, with all its extravagancies, cannot be ſuppoſed capable of reconciling ſo great a contradiction. The men of letters in China do not certainly believe the ſoul of Confucius to be the Divinity. Thus, their days of faſting, their ſacrifices, and all the ridiculous practices they have borrowed from the bonzes of *Fo*, prove evidently their ſuperſtition, but not their idolatry.

Real philoſophers would endeavour to honor the memory of Confucius by rendering themſelves more virtuous, and not by ſhedding the blood of victims.

† Penſées ſur les Livres nouveaux, à l'an 1689.

The great Newton, who could not endure to ſee the death of a chicken or a lamb, would have been very far from aſſiſting at their ſacrifices in ſpring and autumn. Superſtition characteriſes equally the leſs ſolemn ceremonies, which take place nearly twice in each lunary month, and inſtead of having any connexion with philoſophy, they are dedicated to the prediction of future events.

If the French nation, reſolving to reverence in a very extraordinary manner the memory of Deſcartes, ſhould introduce the monkiſh practices of the Minims and Carmelites, they would no longer be regarded as wiſe men, but as ſilly people, worthy of the greateſt contempt. Yet the literati of China have undoubtedly copied their ceremonies from thoſe of the monks, and like them they faſt in preparing for their ſacrifices. Mr. Jackſon, after examining why the Chineſe have no myſteries or initiations, like the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, concludes that nothing of the kind was neceſſary with them, becauſe they never deified men *. He imagined that nothing more was revealed on thoſe occaſions, than that the gods of paganiſm had been mortals: but that ſuppoſition being falſe, the reaſon alleged by him vaniſhes; and if capable of proving any thing, it would be exactly the contrary of what he intended.

By reading attentively the Pantheon of Mr. Jablonſki, whoſe reſearches have been carried as far as poſſible, it will be ſeen that the Egyptians never ren-

* Chronological Antiquities, at the article China.

dered

dered to any man, living or dead, ſuch ſuſpicious honors as the Chineſe did to Confucius. Hence it follows, that in China myſteries were more neceſſary than in any other place, to preſerve the human mind from the abyſs into which it might be drawn by the appearances of public worſhip. If we are to believe the miſſionaries, ſuch abuſes have in reality been carried to the greateſt length; and we know the famous decree publiſhed by Cardinal de Tournon at Nankin*. But here we are not to reaſon after the ideas either of miſſionaries or cardinals; and it is ſufficient to obſerve, that, if not the ſlighteſt trace of initiations has ever been known among the Chineſe, it is an additional proof that they never had any communication with the Egyptians, who, according to Warburton himſelf, were the inventors of thoſe ceremonies.

Although *Fo* or *Budha* has preached, as is well known, a double doctrine, we do not find that the bonzes of China ever took advantage of it to eſtabliſh myſteries. They follow almoſt generally, at this day, the exterior or ſymbolical worſhip; and it is only among the *fakirs* of India, that ſome ſectators are found of the internal doctrine, in which certain ignorant travellers and miſſionaries fancied they ſaw all the principles of Spinoſa. But no ſyſtem was

* The third article of this decree condemns as deteſtable idolatry the worſhip paid by the literati to Confucius. But were the Chineſe to pronounce entirely from appearances on what paſſes in Italy, Spain, and Portugal, they would probably think of iſſuing a decree likewiſe to the ſame effect as that of Tournon.

ever

ever more contrary to atheiſm than that of *Budha*; and were this fact not univerſally admitted at the preſent day, we might be tempted to demonſtrate it moſt evidently. That Indian who corrupted the ancient dogmas of his country, was an auſtere fanatic: he overſtrained every thing, and rendered virtue ridiculous. It was not only neceſſary, according to him, to deſtroy the paſſions, but even the ſenſes; and he ordered his diſciples to confine their thoughts ſolely to the Divinity, keeping their bodies in continual repoſe, and their minds in conſtant meditation.

The vain pretext of attaining a ſtate of tranquillity, entirely oppoſite to the nature of man, and even of beaſts, filled China at length with a multitude of monks. The greateſt impoſtors, and moſt cunning of theſe intriguers, obtained fixed eſtabliſhments in the beſt provinces, while the others wandered about begging or robbing the people. The abuſe became ſo general, that complaints were carried to the throne of the emperor, who was a prince born with the loweſt ſentiments, and whoſe weakneſs approached to idiotiſm. Inſtead of relieving his ſubjects by deſtroying the diſorder in the bud, he declared himſelf publicly in favor of the bonzes and bonzeſſes of *Fo*, who ever ſince the beginning of the fourth century ſuppoſed themſelves capable of contending with the adherents of *Lao-kium*. This ſpirit of rivalſhip was the ſource of many crimes, of which only the ſmalleſt part are known in Europe: both parties had recourſe to intrigues, invectives, and libels. The monks of

Fo

Fo are ſaid to have cauſed more than five thouſand volumes to be written in their name, either to juſtify their rules and doctrine, or in defending themſelves againſt calumnies, and abuſing others. They always repreſented to the government, that as the empire had no prieſts, the people could not diſpenſe with monks; and they held forth that hoſpitality was confined to their pagodas, when that virtue became more neceſſary from the wretched ſtate of the inns. Travellers, they alleged, could gain admittance at every hour into their monaſteries; and even ambaſſadors had frequently lodged there; becauſe *cong-quan*, or public houſes, were not erected in all the towns, or had fallen, as frequently happens, into ruin.

The inns are indeed beyond compariſon more paltry in China than even in Spain and Portugal *; but the bonzes had no right to remedy one great abuſe by another, ſtill more enormous. The Jeſuits pretend, that no perſon can paſs a night with ſafety in the bonzeries; and yet we find by their own accounts, that they frequently lodged there, without our ever having heard the number of thoſe who were robbed or aſſaſſinated.

* *Some of theſe inns appear better furniſhed than others; but they are all exceedingly wretched. They conſiſt of four earthen walls without plaſter, which ſuſtain a roof where the rafters are viſible. After all, it is fortunate if this covering be weather-proof. The chambers are ſometimes full of holes; and deſtitute of even a common pavement.* Du Halde's Deſcription of China. Such are the beſt hotels in China: the others, in the centre of the provinces, are too bad to admit of any compariſon.

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The poſſeſſions, as well as the credit of the monks of *Fo*, were conſiderably augmented by an edict of the emperor *Ven-ti*, who declared himſelf their protector; but ſtill more by the culpable conduct of the emperor *Kao-tſou*. Having eſcaped from his palace, he was ſoon after found in an hermitage, or bonzery of the ſecond rank, where he began by ſhaving his head, and ended by embracing all the rules of *Fo*. This ſilly prince was afterwards brought back to court; but his folly remained incurable.

As the northern parts of China were then governed by particular princes, the monks found more difficulty in fixing themſelves there than in the ſouth, where the fertility of the ſoil being greater, and phyſical wants fewer, the people could give way to their more exalted enthuſiaſm, in providing them with food and clothing. All at once the reſolution was taken throughout the northern provinces of deſtroying the whole of their convents, ſome of which, like that called *Yong-chen*, or perpetual peace, contained upwards of a thouſand perſons. In ſhort, all the bonzeries there were reduced to aſhes about the year five hundred and fifty-ſeven of our era; but no meaſures were taken to prevent them from being rebuilt; and they re-appeared ſoon after.

This ſtorm in the north had not ſubſided more than ſixty-nine years, when another aroſe in the very court of the emperor *Yao-ti*, who, owing to the wretched ſtate of population, could no longer recruit his armies. The bonzes of *Lao-kium*, who directed that prince, conſidered the moment as very favorable

favorable for ruining the monks of *Fo*; and they adviſed *Yao ti* to carry off from the convents one hundred thouſand men, and force them to marry in deſpite of their vow of chaſtity. That advice produced an edict on the twenty-ſixth of May, in the year ſix hundred and twenty-ſix, which reduced almoſt to nothing the number of pagodas and monaſteries, called *ſon* in China. But as the impoſitions of the monks of *Lao-kium* had dictated that edict, the intrigues of the monks of *Fo* occaſioned its repeal forty-two days afterwards, to the ſhame of the prince and his miniſters.

The weak emperor *Yao-ti* was replaced on the throne by *Tai-tſong*, who, far from diminiſhing the number of bonzes and bonzeſſes, received into his ſtates certain devout ſtrangers, ſuppoſed by ſome to have been Neſtorians. Their eſtabliſhment in the province of *Chen-ſi* cauſed for a time the hatred and jealouſies of the monaſtic orders in China to ceaſe; and they united to exterminate theſe pretended Neſtorians. Their pagodas were levelled to the ground, and their adherents cruelly perſecuted until the reign of the emperor *Hiven tſong*, who finding himſelf attacked in the centre of his dominions by robbers, and on the frontiers by the Tartars, not only protected the different ſects, but even favored the followers of Confucius.

The conduct of the Chineſe hitherto diſcovers neither rule nor plan for delivering themſelves from the bonzes, who, inſtead of being reformed, were attacked ſuddenly like enemies, and afterwards received into favor. Much of their property was taken

taken away at certain times, and more reſtored to them at others. In this manner they fluctuated between extremes with an inconſtancy only equalled, perhaps, by the facts we are about to relate.

As the police was then exceedingly neglected, a new order of *Seng*, or ſtrange monks, found means to introduce themſelves into the empire. They are taken by ſome for Lamas, and by others for Manicheans, who had formed themſelves into a congregation *; but, at all events, they were included in the proſcription of the emperor *Wou-tſong*. When we know that he had placed his confidence in the monks of *Lao-kium*, it can no longer appear ſurpriſing, that thoſe avaricious fanatics ſhould have taken advantage of that inſtant of favor, to cruſh their rivals, and exterminate them altogether.

Tchao-kouey, who was prelate, or chief, of the order of *Lao-kium*, promiſed to procure the drink of immortality for the emperor, if he would iſſue an edict againſt the monks of *Fo*, or *Che-kia*. The prince took the potion, and ſigned the decree, on the ſeventh of Auguſt, in the year eight hundred and forty-five of our era. This occaſioned the deſtruction of four thouſand ſix hundred principal monaſteries, which contained two hundred and eighty thouſand monks and nuns, whom the magiſtrates reſtored to the ſtate, and ſubjected to the poll-tax, from which they had withdrawn themſelves fraudulently, at the expence of the people. The number of monaſteries of

* Father Pons ſays, that India contains hermits, or monks, called *Mouni*; and it appears that this word has been confounded with *Mani*, which is ſometimes uſed in Aſia to denote the Manicheans.

the

the ſecond rank, condemned to the ſame fate, amounted to forty thouſand, poſſeſſing one hundred and fifty thouſand ſlaves, and about one million *tching* of freehold lands. All theſe were confiſcated by the emperor, and added to his domain, without examining how they had been acquired; for he concluded every thing found there muſt be uſurped property *.

The order of *Fo* became ſo completely annihilated, that the ſectaries of *Lao-kium* publiſhed their triumph in canticles of joy to Heaven for ſuch remarkable favor. But the intriguers of the court, the women, and the eunuchs, prevailed in having the edict modified ſeven or eight days after it had been iſſued. The emperor allowed four or five hundred monks of *Fo* to remain in his dominions; but all the reſt were dragged ignominiouſly from their convents. Not a ruin of all thoſe buildings was allowed to remain, and the clocks were converted into money, which was as ſcarce as miſery was common. China then preſented only the ſhadow of an empire, and it deſerved the title of the *land of abuſes*. This reform, ſo very deſirable, continued to be executed with ſucceſs, when the emperor *Wou-tſong*, under whom it had commenced, expired, moſt probably by the drink of immortality he had the weakneſs to ſwallow. *Suen-tſong*, who ſucceeded to the throne, had ideas very different from thoſe of his predeceſſor; and he protected the monks of *Fo* againſt

* If the number of monaſteries then exiſting in China be exaggerated, it does not proceed from the tranſlators. The Chineſe text ſays four *onan* of *ſou*, which makes forty thouſand convents of the ſecond order.

thoſe

thoſe of *Lao-kium.* Thus that order, which ſeemed to have been deſtroyed, roſe again ſuddenly, and became more inſolent and pernicious to the ſtate than ever. The prelate *Tchao-kouey*, the author of the revolution, was hung or ſtrangled without any formality; and the emperor condemned nine or ten more of the followers of *Lao-kium* to a ſimilar deſtiny.

Thus, in four hundred and forty-ſeven, only two years after the reſolution had been taken of relieving the people by diſcharging a multitude of drones, an imperial edict was iſſued for rebuilding all the convents and pagodas deſtroyed in the preceding reign. The emperor then enjoined the tribunals to allow all thoſe of both ſexes, who preſented themſelves for that purpoſe, to embrace the order of *Fo*, or *Chekia.* Such has been the ſtrange, whimſical, and inconceivable conduct of the government of China. That country is now afflicted more than ever with the greateſt of all plagues; and no hope remains of any fortunate change, unleſs the men of letters apply themſelves to true ſcience with more ardor and ſucceſs. In fact, it is only by ſpreading the light of philoſophy, that the darkneſs of ſuperſtition can be diſpelled; and all attempts to deſtroy the bonzes, while ignorance prevails, are contradictory. Thoſe men, who, having eſcaped amidſt ſo many tempeſts, ſurvive as it were even deſtruction, would diſappear gradually at the dawn of ſcience. This is ſo true, that when a prince of Japan founded ſchools, and invited the learned into his dominions, the monks were

were ſeen deſerting in whole troops from a country, where they began to ſtarve, becauſe the people became enlightened. Yet the inſtitution of monkiſm in Japan is much more reaſonable than that of the bonzes in China; for the blind only are admiſſible in the order of *Fakis*; and we have already obſerved that cecity is very common there as well as among the Chineſe, who ſuffer their blind to beg, tell fortunes, or live by proſtitution.

The Tartar emperors indeed have not ceaſed, during more than a century, to encourage the ſciences; but their progreſs has hitherto been imperceptible. If the Chineſe could diveſt themſelves of that national vanity, to which they have no title, they would adopt without heſitating the writing and language of the Mandhuis. This muſt be leſs difficult, as many of the literati know it already; and all Tartars, male or female, who intermarry with the Chineſe, are obliged by a rigorous law to teach it to their children *. That language is infinitely ſuperior to the Chineſe jargon, in which nothing can be written with preciſion on true ſcience; becauſe it contains neither declenſions, conjugations, nor conjunctions for uniting the ſentences. Thoſe who ap-

* Some learned Europeans maintain, that no alphabetical character could ever be adapted to write a ſinging language like that of the Chineſe. Admitting this to be true, it is an additional reaſon why they ſhould adopt the Tartar language, which can be written by our letters. The pronunciation of the R is not an invincible obſtacle, if the Chineſe would make the attempt. But the changes made in our days, by *Kien-long*, in the Tartar characters, are not merely uſeleſs; they are pernicious.

ply to ſtudy, would certainly make more progreſs in one year, by means of the Tartar idiom, than could be effected in fifteen by that of the Chineſe, joined to their characters. The whole of youth is conſumed, and the memory enervated, in acquiring ſome knowledge of the letters or ſigns alone. Thus the literati, who have learned as far as ten thouſand characters, appear ſilly and ſtupid after the prime of life, and they are continually teazing the miſſionaries of Europe for ſome noſtrum to fortify the memory. But the beſt remedy they can uſe is, to abandon their manner of writing, and adopt that of the Tartars. Conring ſuppoſes that the hieroglyphics prevented the progreſs of the Egyptians in the ſciences *; but he reaſoned without underſtanding his ſubject. It is not neceſſary to go further back than the days of Moſes, to prove that the Egyptians certainly made uſe of alphabetical characters in the ſame manner that they are employed by us at the preſent day. The hieroglyphics were reſerved for particular matters, and their number muſt have been very confined, becauſe we ſee the ſame figures in almoſt all the monuments. Thus it was very improper to compare the Egyptians, who had an alphabet, to the Chineſe, who neither uſed any thing of the kind, nor ever heard of the twenty-two letters, ſuch as they have appeared on the bandages of the mummies. Mr. de Guignes could not have known thoſe characters; and we muſt, therefore, conſider what he

* Medic. Herm. cap. xv.

has

has written on that ſubject as a mere exerciſe of the imagination. It is in fact as little founded as the voyage of the Chineſe, who are made by him to arrive in America through Kamſchatka, as Bergerac went to the moon by the way of Quebec.

After this digreſſion, it is proper to examine what the bonzes of China have advanced in favor of their being uſeful to the ſtate. Their hoſpitality, in the firſt place, is the effect of an abuſe which might eaſily be remedied by improving the police, and erecting inns for the accommodation of travellers of every rank and condition. The *cong-quan*, or public-houſes, fell into ruin, it is ſaid, on the invaſion of the Tartars. But we have little reaſon to think, that thoſe conquerors would have amuſed themſelves with throwing down or plundering buildings almoſt entirely deſtitute of furniture. They were beſides of no utility to common travellers, becauſe, in order to procure lodging there, it was neceſſary to be provided with an order from the court. Concerning the want of prieſts, or ſacrificers, who cannot be diſpenſed with in the Indian religion, which has been embraced by all the people of China, that indeed is a great inconvenience. If the emperor, however, would only allot one fourth part of the lands poſſeſſed by the bonzeries for the maintenance of ſacrificers, the purpoſe would be much better anſwered, and thoſe men might be employed in the public ſchools, if any ſhould be afterwards erected. Never was it known that the bonzes inſtructed youth in any of the provinces of the empire; and their ignorance is ſuch,

that they are really incapable of the taſk. Thus, in whatever light thoſe men are conſidered, they are unworthy of the leaſt indulgence.

With regard to the monks of *Lao-kium*, their pretenſions are ſaid to be founded on ſome right, claimed by them, of aſſiſting as muſicians at the great ſacrifices offered at each equinox and ſolſtice by the emperor, or the perſon deputed by him, in caſe of ſickneſs, minority, or abſence.

Admitting this to be true, the monks of *Lao-kium* have at leaſt ſome connexion with the ancient religion of China. Yet the ſervices they render, by producing a deteſtable muſic during the ſacrifices, could never compenſate for the evils they create by deceiving poor wretches, and even by poiſoning them with the drink of immortality. By pretending to have the ſecret of preparing this potion, they attract as much veneration as by their legends concerning *Lao-kium*, who deſcended, as they allege, from the royal family of *Tcheou*. Thus, according to their genealogy, the imperial family of *Tang* muſt have iſſued from *Lao-kium*. Yet, in our opinion, he was an obſcure man; and hiſtorians do not agree even on the preciſe time in which he lived *. The greater part make him, with much apparent probability, cotemporary with Confucius; and the prelates of his order affirm that, ſince his death, their regular ſucceſſion has never once been interrupted. They therefore eſteem themſelves

* Some hiſtorians pretend, that *Lao-kium* lived ſtill at the extinction of the dynaſty of *Tcheou*, about 249 years before our era.

as more noble than thoſe reputed as belonging to the family of Confucius, who did not become illuſtrious until a much later period. It appears to me, that this pretended family of Confucius is likewiſe ſome kind of monaſtic order or religious congregation; and this might have been known by making reſearches at *Chio-fou*, in the province of *Chan-tong*. That ſpot, ſo intereſting, has been entirely neglected; at leaſt we do not find any ſatisfactory information concerning it. No judicious perſon will readily believe, that one family could have inhabited the ſame burgh, during more than two thouſand years, amidſt all the dreadful revolutions produced in China by civil wars, foreign invaſions, irregular ſhocks of deſpotiſm, famine, revolts, and combinations of robbers. The latter alone, in a certain length of time, pillaged almoſt the whole country; and perhaps not one town eſcaped being taken by thoſe ruffians, who ſometimes were known to ſhed more blood than foreign enemies. When Canton fell into their hands, they ſlaughtered upwards of one hundred thouſand perſons; and their cruelties at Pe-kin have been already mentioned. It is therefore ſcarcely credible, that the family of Confucius could have remained conſtantly until now in the ſmall town of *Kiou-fou*, unleſs we conſider it as a monaſtic order. In that caſe, the fact changes entirely its nature, and does not require the ſuppoſition of any regular filial ſucceſſion. This opinion ſeems to be confirmed by the title of *Saint* given by the Chineſe to Confucius; and the religious worſhip they render to him, conveys

ideas very different from thoſe attached by us to the word *Philoſopher*, which has nothing ſynonimous in their language. It is ſaid, likewiſe, that he introduced ſeveral changes in religion, and aboliſhed the cuſtom of placing ſmall ſtatues in the tombs; but he would have acted more wiſely by preventing his countrymen from filling the mouths of the dead with pearls, and burying them in a ruinous manner.

As the great ſacrifices of the Chineſe have long been fixed to the equinoxes and ſolſtices, that circumſtance is frequently cited as a proof of their progreſs in aſtronomy ever ſince the moſt diſtant ages. To this is added the firſt chapter of the canonical book, called *Chou-King*, where, as Father Gaubil informs us, *Yao* is ſaid to have known with preciſion the duration of the ſolar year, and the moſt exact method of intercalation Inſtead, however, of employing that form of almanac, he forbade it among the people, and inſtituted the lunar year. But the fact is, that the firſt chapter of the *Chou-King* is a compoſition of a much later date, and cannot be admitted as proving any thing in favour of *Yao*. The canonical books of the Chineſe are too imperfect and confuſed to admit of much faith; and the *Chou-King*, ſaid to have been compiled by Confucius, who lived ſeventeen hundred years after *Yao*, is at beſt only a fragment, where forty-one chapters are wanting. Independently of all theſe conſiderations, it is impoſſible that the Chineſe, while they remained, by their own confeſſion, in a ſtate of barbariſm, could have been better acquainted with aſtronomy than at this day, when they are obliged

obliged to employ Germans at Pe-kin to compoſe the almanacs of the empire. Can it be ſuppoſed, that, if any among themſelves were capable of performing ſuch calculations, they would invite ſtrangers from a country three thouſand leagues diſtant, to prevent a total confuſion? It would be exactly a ſimilar caſe, if the Academy of Sciences at Paris applied to the Talaquoins of Japan to foretel eclipſes in France.

The Chineſe year, we ſhould obſerve, was always lunary, and never commenced towards the riſing of Sirius. Thus they differed as much from the Egyptians in their calendars, as in their religious inſtitutions. If they were alike addicted to judicial aſtrology, their error is common to all the nations of Aſia and Africa, where the ancient worſhip of ſtars and planets neceſſarily produced that ſpecies of ſuperſtition. When the Arabs became maſters of the tribunal of mathematics, they took care not to riſk their bread by aboliſhing ſuch practices; and Father Hallerſtein himſelf is now under the neceſſity of inſerting various predictions in the *Tang-ſio*, or almanac, compiled by him, as chief of the aſtronomers. That body is principally compoſed of Europeans; and, without their aid, no *han-lin* or college of Pe-kin could be compared to the preſent *Gia-mea-el-aſhar*, or the academy of Cairo. Yet the arts and ſciences in modern Egypt have not preſerved the ſhadow of their former ſplendor.

The diſorders prevalent in the Chineſe calculations at the conqueſt of the Mogul Tartars, prove ſufficiently that, long previous to that epoch, the grand

ſacrifices could not be performed exactly as they were intended at the equinoxes and ſolſtices. Neither of thoſe periods were indicated in their calendar, which was held in ſuch contempt throughout Aſia, that the people inhabiting between Bengal and the province of *Yun-nen* refuſed to adopt what they juſtly termed a bundle of errors. When the Arabian aſtronomers, by order of *Koublai Kan*, had rectified theſe blunders, the pride of the Chineſe became inſupportable, and they ordered the Indians to receive their calendars, or prepare for war. As no attention was paid to this menace, a Chineſe army of twenty thouſand men marched againſt the pretended rebels; but it received ſuch a total defeat, that ſcarcely a ſingle perſon eſcaped; and, ever ſince, the project has been abandoned entirely. The intention was really to eſtabliſh a commerce with thoſe books, although each of them ſold for no more than eight kandarins. The Chineſe traffic with every thing, and, when unemployed in that manner, they are, like the Jews, out of their element.

Since the ſecond correction of the Chineſe year, which took place under the Tartar emperors of the preſent dynaſty, the ſolemn ſacrifices are performed punctually at each equinox and ſolſtice with great parade; and the number of muſicians employed there may amount to about five or ſix hundred. Yet theſe concerts, where the ſound of the drum always predominates, can give no idea of the ancient muſic of the Chineſe, which, as they ſay, is entirely loſt. According to them, every thing has degenerated; and

they

they were much greater artiſts in a ſtate of barbariſm, under the Kan *Fo-hi*, than ever afterwards in civil life. Such ridiculous opinions do not deſerve to be refuted. Their ancient inſtruments of muſic, of which we find the different forms in the *Chou-King*, were beyond compariſon more imperfect than thoſe they employ at this day, as every perſon muſt perceive on inſpecting the figures.

Whenever the noiſe of the muſic is heard, the victims are butchered, and offered with much incenſe to the genius of the ſky. No leſs ſolemnity is obſerved in ſacrificing to the genius of the earth, whoſe temple is conſtructed in a different manner. All theſe genii, according to the literati, are emanations of *Tai-ki*, or the Great Height; and in this we obſerve nothing more than a rude deiſm. Men plunged ſo deeply as they are in an ignorance of nature cannot poſſibly attain more ſublime ideas, without the aid of philoſophy and true ſcience, which would ſoon deſtroy the doctrine of ſpirits or manitous. On the four ſides of the altar are ſeen great ſtones, repreſenting the genii of the mountains, wood, metal, air, and fire. It is chiefly in honor of the latter, ſays Mr. Oſbeck, that the Chineſe obſerve the feaſt of lanterns, that their towns, ſo very combuſtible in their nature, may be preſerved from the flames *.

Nothing can be more ridiculous than the idea, that this illumination had ſome connexion with the feaſt of lamps celebrated at Athens, and Sais, in honor of

* Reiſe nach Oſtindien und China.

Minerva.

Minerva. The Chineſe never even heard of that deity; and this is ſo certain, that no perſon of real learning would attempt to maintain the contrary. If the moſt knowing among the literati at Pe-kin were to ſee a figure of Minerva, with the ſymbols of the lamp and the ſphinx, which the Greeks placed on her helmet, or with the ſcarabee, according to the ideas of the Egyptians, they would underſtand as little of that allegorical ſtatue as of the hieroglyphics, or the obeliſks.

It might have happened that the Chineſe celebrated the feaſt of lanterns in February, on the ſame day allotted by the Catholics of Europe for the feaſt of luminaries; and, in that caſe, it would be ridiculous to infer, that one of thoſe uſages had been copied from the other. The moſt ſtriking reſemblances are frequently deceitful; and we have an inſtance of this in the error of Bochard with regard to the fox-races in the circus at Rome. As fire brands were tied to the tails of thoſe animals, he imagined that the Romans intended in that manner to perpetuate the remembrance of an event ſo memorable as that of the burning of ſome corn-fields on the confines of Paleſtine, contrary to the law of nations. But, in truth, the Romans were very indifferent about what paſſed in Paleſtine; and the fox-race was much indebted to the imagination of Ovid.

Nothing is more fabulous than what Father le Comte, in his Memoirs on China, relates concerning the origin of the feaſt of lanterns. He pretends that the emperor *Kie*, having complained of the ſhortneſs

of

of human life, was adviſed to light up his palace in ſuch a manner that night could not be diſtinguiſhed from day. This inſipid ſtory, as we obſerved before, muſt have been extracted from another in Herodotus, relative to a king of Egypt, who having underſtood, from the oracle of *Buta* in the Delta, that he had only ſix years to live, cauſed likewiſe his court to be illuminated, that he might enjoy the more light; as if a man, who had only ſix years to live, could on that account diſpenſe with ſleep. But Herodotus, without examining matters ſo cloſely, contented himſelf with noting down all the abſurdities he could collect from the interpreters of Egypt.

Father Parrenin took care to write from Pe-kin to Mr. Mairan, that this origin of the feaſt of lanterns was a mere fable, publiſhed in Europe by Father le Comte, who had, as we ſee profited greatly by reading Herodotus; and if the thing deſerved the trouble, we could demonſtrate here, that the Jeſuits have inſerted facts extracted from the Bible in the Hiſtory of China. When the Chineſe authors are conſulted on the pretended adventure of the prince or emperor *Kie*, we find nothing but childiſh and diſguſting prodigies. They aſſure us, that during his reign a ſtar fell from heaven; that the ſyſtem or courſe of the planets was evidently deranged; the mountains fell down, and three ſuns appeared at once towards the eaſt. Yet no perſon could ſee at the court of the prince, becauſe he had rendered all his apartments inacceſſible to the rays of light. It is almoſt ſuperfluous to add, that hiſtory, written in this manner, does

not

not deſerve to be read. All that the Chineſe know really, concerning the emperor *Kie*, comprehends very little indeed; but with them prodigies are frequently ſubſtituted for hiſtorical facts. They inceſſantly praiſe Confucius for having ſpoken of the fall of ſtars, the rolling down of mountains, the ſong of the matchleſs bird, the appariiion of the unicorn, and the metamorphoſis of inſects, which they long conſidered as miraculous.

Thus, as we have ſeen, no connexion whatever ſubſiſts between the feaſt celebrated in honor of Minerva, and the great illumination of China, where all the ſymbolical divinities of Egypt are unknown. It is not neceſſary to conſider here the difference of the terms *Tien* or *Chang-ti*, uſed by the Chineſe to denote the genius of the ſky, and the Egyptian words *Phtha* and *Cnuph*, in which Euſebius perceives the Creator of the univerſe. The Jeſuits acknowledge unanimouſly, that the Chineſe form no ſuch ideas of their genii; and Mr. Leibnitz conforms to that opinion *.

Confucius, it is ſaid, was aſked to explain his ſentiments of the Divinity; but having excuſed himſelf for the time, he went home, and wrote, as Father Couplet ſays, the following words in his Commentary on the *Y king*:

The Great Height engendered two qualities: the perfect and the imperfect. Theſe two qualities engendered

* Martini, among the reſt, expreſſes himſelf thus: *De ſummo ac primo rerum Auctore mirum apud omnes Sinas ſilentium: quippe in tam copioſa lingua nec nomen quidam Deus habet.* Hiſt. Sin. lib. i.

four

four images: theſe four images produced the eight figures of Fo-hi, *that is to ſay, all things.*

Who at the preſent day would venture to aſſert, that this declaration contains the ſmalleſt particle of common ſenſe? It anſwers no purpoſe to object, that other ancient philoſophers have ſometimes written in a manner equally unreaſonable. They at leaſt never pretended to write treatiſes on ſorcery, or rhabdomancy, ſuch as that wherein Confucius is ſaid to have inſerted the words we have quoted, relative to divination by rods; which, we may be allowed to repeat, diſcovers no ſymptoms of common ſenſe.

If any thing could have plunged the literati into fataliſm, it muſt have been the fooliſh doctrine of Confucius on the power of chance; and certainly ſome of them have hazarded very monſtrous chimeras, on the revolution of the five Chineſe elements, which alternately produce a new imperial family or dynaſty. When, for example, an imperial family is produced by the power of water, or the genius preſiding over that element, it cannot give more than twenty emperors, whoſe actions are all the effect of fate or neceſſity: if they were free, ſay they, we could not predict them by the table of chances, commented upon by the great Confucius.

Although Mr. Viſdelou attributes this doctrine to the men of letters in general, yet we muſt ſuppoſe that only the ſilleſt among them are capable of publiſhing ſuch abſurdities. Probably, indeed, they underſtand nothing of the matter; for in China, as in the reſt of the world, people frequently confuſe their

ideas

ideas in ſuch a manner, that they can no longer explain either what they credit or diſbelieve. Thus, ſpeaking of the religion of China, we have ſtated only general opinions; becauſe it would be difficult to find two or three hundred of the literati poſſeſſing preciſely the ſame ſentiments, and a like number capable of remaining one day invariable in their principles; and as many more who form diſtinct notions of what they pretend to believe. Thoſe, who make the human ſoul double, which comes nearly to the ſame thing with the *homo duplex* of ſome metaphyſicians of Europe, may be counted among the number of thoſe who do not underſtand themſelves. Father Longobardi ſays, in his famous treatiſe, that the literati of China declared to him openly their ſentiments of atheiſm. But they had perhaps fuddled themſelves, like Hobbes, whoſe infidelity frequently diſappeared with his intoxication.

The paſſion of the Chineſe for ſorcery proves them to be ſuperſtitious, but not at all fataliſts. Beſides the divination by rods, they practiſe another mode with a plant called *chi*. After having drawn out the fibres of the leaf, they throw them at random, and then examine how far their poſition agrees with the *Y-king*. This method appears to me to have been practiſed with very little variation by the ſoothſayers of Scythia when they twiſted the leaves of the willow, erroneouſly called the lime-tree in the Latin verſion of Herodotus. That author muſt have had very particular information concerning the Aſiatic Scythians, for the truth of his details is confirmed daily;

and it would be difficult to conceive the poſſibility of his being ſo well acquainted with the cuſtoms of thoſe diſtant nations, did we not obſerve the ſame accuracy in the geography of Ptolemy. He points out preciſely ſome parts of Sericum, or Igour, although thoſe countries were the end of the world to the Greeks and Romans, who knew as little of the Chineſe as we do of the inhabitants of the South Pole. Herodotus had travelled into Colchis; and, when we reflect on the extraordinary route by which the merchants of that country found means to traffic with India, we may be able to account for his preciſion.

It is generally believed, that the ſectaries, ſuppoſed to be Neſtorians, went in the ſeventh century to preach Chriſtianity in China, where they were firſt protected, then perſecuted, and finally maſſacred. They had the diſciples of *Læo-kium*, the bonzes, and the empreſs, for declared enemies; and their preaching anſwered no other purpoſe than to produce bloodſhed. Not one Chriſtian remained in China at the conqueſt of the Mogul Tartars, who favored indiſcriminately all ſtrangers, whoſe induſtry might be uſeful to the ſtate, without caring what was their religion. *Koublai Kan* even fixed ſome Chriſtian families at Pe-kin, which the patriarch of Bagdad on one ſide, and the pope on the other, erected into an archbiſhopric. But the emperor eſtabliſhed a tribunal, called *Tſoum-fouſſe*, to ſuperintend the two metropolitans. On the expulſion of the Mogul Tartars, the Chriſtians, after ſuffering another violent perſecution, were at length totally

totally extirpated. The moſt prudent fled to Tartary; ſome embraced the religion of the bonzes, and the reſt were maſſacred. In the year one thouſand five hundred and ninety-two, when no trace of Chriſtianity could be found in China, ſome miſſionaries began again to preach there; but the Neophytes, except a very ſmall number, who held conſiderable employments, were all of the vileſt dregs of the people. As the wives of that claſs of men went to church, the better ſort of Chineſe were much ſcandalized, and they conſidered the miſſionaries as corrupters. Some Jeſuits fancied they could calm ſuch ſuſpicions by having ſeparate chapels for the two ſexes *: but this intended remedy only aggravated the offence. The governor of *Ham-theou* was ſo exaſperated, on hearing that many women were ſhut up in a church with two or three men, that, without waiting for orders from court, he cauſed the church to be levelled to the very foundation. In their reſpective departments, the governors act in a manner almoſt deſpotic; and the Chriſtians have ſometimes been ſtrongly protected in certain provinces, while violently perſecuted in others. Polygamy, however, was always an inſurmountable obſtacle to the progreſs of their doctrines. The miſſionaries, inſiſting poſitively on repudiation, would not allow their converts to preſerve more than one wife: but they never attempted to aboliſh perſonal bondage, although it is more contrary to the rights of nature than polygamy, which is almoſt a neceſſary

* Gobien, Hiſtory of China.

conſe-

conſequence of ſlavery in warm countries. It was pretended, that the primitive Chriſtians never required ſuch ſacrifices; and that different religious communities in Europe poſſeſſed bond-men during many centuries. But this was a dreadful abuſe, which cannot be alleged as a precedent; for what is contrary to natural right can never be admitted in morality. When a Chineſe had married ſeveral wives, in conformity to the laws of his country, he could not repudiate them, eſpecially when mothers, without injuſtice; but he was always at liberty to make his ſlaves free; and thus the conduct of the miſſionaries was altogether contradictory. On the other hand, the government of China never knew what religion ſhould be tolerated or excluded. Admiſſion was given there to Jews, Mahometans, Lamas, Parſis, Manis, Marrha, Si-lipan *, Yeli-Kaoven, Armenians, Bramins, Neſtorians, Greek Chriſtians, who had a church at Pe-kin, and to Catholics. The latter, however, ſuffered more perſecution than all the reſt together, and they were at laſt totally exterminated. The emperor *Can-hi* alone iſſued three contradictory edicts concerning them. He firſt prohibited preaching, then gave permiſſion, and afterwards enforced his firſt decree, without ever knowing in what the Catholic religion conſiſted. It is a fact, that the miſſionaries never dared to ſhow him either the Bible or the Evangeliſts. We are aſſured, and with much ap-

* The religion of the Marrha and of the Si-lipan is not well known; but it is probably a miſtake to ſuppoſe them to be Chriſtians.

parent truth, that in one thouſand ſix hundred and ninety-two, this prince knew nothing of the conqueſts made by the Europeans in America, on the coaſt of Africa, in the Molucca Iſlands, and in ſo many parts of Aſia. Let us only reflect on ſuch men as the Mandhui Tartars, who all at once ſubdued China, without having any notion either of hiſtory or geography; and then we cannot be ſurpriſed, that the emperor *Can-hi* ſhould be totally ignorant of the conduct of the Chriſtians in America. It was from his being previouſly unacquainted with ſuch matters, that the memorial, preſented at Pe-kin in one thouſand ſeven hundred and ſeventeen, made an indelible impreſſion on the minds of the Tartars. It repreſented the Chriſtians as a band of conſpirators, who intended to render themſelves maſters in the empire, as they had done in the New World. This project certainly was not real; but it ſeemed probable to the Tartars, who had not eighty thouſand effective men when they entered Pe-kin. They were indeed favored by the eunuchs of the palace; but the taking of the capital was nothing, as long as they had not poſſeſſion of the ſouthern provinces, which however were conquered very rapidly. Not one inland town of China is capable of reſiſting a regular ſiege of three days; and admiral Anſon declared, that a ſingle ſhip of ſixty guns would be ſufficient to ſink a whole Chineſe fleet. The perſon, who ſought to alarm the court of Pe-kin on account of the Neophytes and miſſionaries, muſt therefore have been well acquainted with the weakneſs of his own country. It has, in fact, hitherto

eſcaped

eſcaped the fury of our European robbers, merely from its great diſtance; and even that barrier would vaniſh on the diſcovery of a north-weſt paſſage. The princes who ſucceeded *Can-hi*, far from tolerating Chriſtianity, did not ceaſe, until the year one thouſand ſeven hundred and ſixty-ſix, to reſtrain Europeans more and more, and to uſe greater precautions againſt them. But, without intending any act of benevolence, they would have rendered the greateſt ſervice to Europe, by ſhutting their ports entirely to the ſhips of the five nations allowed to traffic at Canton.

We terminate here this Section, after having demonſtrated that never two nations reſembled each other leſs, in what concerns religion, than the Egyptians and Chineſe. The immolation of victims indeed was common to both; but the ſame uſage has been found by modern travellers to ſubſiſt in all the countries they have viſited, except India and Thibet, where the particular circumſtance of the tranſmigration of ſouls has counteracted the general rule. The learned have been at a loſs to know, how ſo many nations of the ancient and new continents could have fallen alike into an extravagance ſo oppoſite to all notions of common ſenſe, as that of ſlaughtering animals in honor of God. Some ſuppoſe it muſt have commenced with priſoners made in war: but the firſt people evidently imagined, that nature contained certain genii, who came to taſte the blood, fleſh, entrails, or ſmoke of the ſacrifices. As all were originally hunters, and afterwards ſhepherds, it is more natural that they ſhould have ſought to regale the gods

with fleſh, than with fruits, which the manitous themſelves could find in the foreſts. Thoſe, who quitted the paſtoral life to till the earth, began at length to offer the firſt fruits of their fields; and then the immolation of victims ſhould have ceaſed. But it was continued, as we have ſaid, from the obſtinacy with which the firſt civilized nations adhered to the religious practices of ſavage life. This is the reaſon why ſo many cuſtoms, invented by the Scythians, are found ſtill in China, while thoſe of the Ethiopians were as evidently continued in Egypt.

SECT. IX.

GOVERNMENT OF EGYPT.

Omnia poſt obitum fingit majora vetuſtas.

WHEN the ancients ſpoke with ſo much commendation of the civil inſtitutions and police of Egypt, they were under a conſtant illuſion. This was occaſioned by the Greek authors, who confounded the laws, really obſerved in that country, with others, which never exiſted but in books. The ſecond volume of the Hermetic Collection contained many ſage maxims, relative to the manner in which the Pharaohs ought to conduct themſelves, in order to reign happily, and gain the applauſe of the people. But many of thoſe princes were far from being inclined to perform the duties preſcribed to them ever ſince the foundation of the monarchy. Some were ſlothful, voluptuous, ſilly, and deteſtable tyrants, who obſerved only vain ceremonies, and really trampled equity under foot. In the ſame manner, all the wicked kings of Judea performed their legal ablutions with the greateſt exactneſs, and never deviated at table from the Moſaic regimen, while the people were cruſhed under their unlawful exactions.

Ammianus Marcellinus is wrong in ſuppoſing that the Roman code was copied from the juriſprudence of Egypt. On the contrary, the decemvirs at Rome rejected the only Egyptian law proper for a republic. It related to debtors, on whoſe perſons no creditor

could exercise the smallest violence; and this regulation was as wise and moderate as that of the decemvirs was barbarous. In short, the twelve tables did not contain the slightest trace of Egyptian jurisprudence, of which even Solon had little knowledge when he reformed the town of Athens, and abolished some of the decrees of Draco; for this took place previous to his journey to Sais, where he seems to have traded.

Some of the Egyptian laws are so simple and clear, that they do not require to be analyzed. The contrary, however, was found in the regulation concerning thieves, which Diodorus the historian, and the lawyer Ariston, by contradicting each other, rendered so complicated, that no philosopher could conceive either its meaning or object. According to Diodorus, the thieves of Egypt were obliged to insert their names in a register; and when any thing stolen was claimed, they restored only three-fourths of the value, because the legislator allowed them to reserve a portion, either to recompense their address, or to punish the negligence of those who suffered their property to be stolen. Diodorus, however, should have perceived that many particular cases could not be decided by this pretended law, but must necessarily have required another, concerning which he is silent.

I remember having read, says Aulus Gellius, *in a work of the lawyer Ariston, that among the Egyptians, who were remarkable for their sagacity in studying nature, and great penetration in inventing the arts, every*

species

ſpecies of theft was allowed by law, and practiſed with impunity *.

By reflecting on theſe two whimſical inſtitutions, it is eaſy to perceive that they could not ſubſiſt in the ſame ſociety, but might well belong to different nations. The authors, who have ſpoken concerning them, were evidently ill informed, becauſe they are at variance with each other and with themſelves. What has been taken for an Egyptian law is in reality an agreement made with the Arabs, who could not be prevented from ſtealing and robbing. It therefore became cuſtomary to redeem ſuch effects as had fallen into their hands, as we find practiſed frequently at the preſent day. The Bedouins reſtore for the hundredth part of their value, the jewels they acquire in plundering a caravan; and they would be content to have always the fourth part in money, for the whole amount of the wares they capture, under the vain pretext, that the deſerts of Arabia Petrea are their dominions. We find a modern traveller endeavouring to juſtify this plea, as if it was not known, that the Bedouins commit ſuch depredations very far from their wilderneſſes, on territories, of which they were never really poſſeſſed, and where of courſe it is unjuſt in them to exact tribute from paſſengers.

Under the ſhepherd kings the Arabs ſpread themſelves in troops over all Egypt, and it became abſo-

* *Id etiam memini legere me in libro Ariſtonis jureconſulti haudquaquam indocti viri, apud veteres Ægyptios, quod genus hominum conſtat & in artibus reperiendis ſolertes extitiſſe, & in cognitione rerum indagandâ ſagaces, furta omnia fuiſſe licita & impunita.* Noct. Att. lib. xi.

lutely neceſſary to have ſome fixed compact with them, relative to the ſpoils they might collect, by ſtealth or plunder. We have reaſon to believe, that pilfered goods were likewiſe bought back from the Jews; for it would be very ſurpriſing, that ſuch men as they ſhould have ſtolen only once in Egypt, eſpecially when protected by the uſurpers. Thoſe tyrants favored ſhepherds and oppreſſed huſbandmen, in order to counteract, as much as poſſible, all the inſtitutions of the vanquiſhed nation.

It is now eaſy to form ſome idea of what was meant by Diodorus Siculus. The names of the thieves were not regiſtered, but application was made to the *emir*, or *ſcheic* of the Arabs, who knew his ſubjects, and made them reſtore what they had taken, on receiving the ſtipulated compenſation *. We do not know how far the ſame conduct was obſerved under the government of the Perſians, when a whole republic of banditti was eſtabliſhed in the Delta. Something of the kind, however, muſt be adopted in every country, where robbers become too powerful to be either expelled or deſtroyed. The marſhes they poſſeſſed near the Heracleotic mouth of the Nile were impaſſable; and neither the Perſians nor Greeks could ever rid themſelves of thoſe enemies; for their ſmall veſſels ſerved them for houſes;

* If the ſpirit of the Egyptian law had been what Diodorus fancied it to be, other regulations would have been neceſſary for thoſe who had ſtolen without having inſcribed their names, or who, although their names had been inſcribed, did not reſtore exactly what they had ſtolen.

and,

and, on the ſlighteſt alarm, they concealed themſelves at a great diſtance among the reeds.

The extreme rigor of the laws in Egypt towards thoſe who ſubſiſted by diſhoneſt means, proves how little they were intended to tolerate theft among the native inhabitants, who were neither Arabs nor Jews. Common ſenſe has taught mankind, that, in a well-regulated ſociety, no robuſt ſubjects ſhould ever be permitted to beg; and Plato dreaded ſuch people ſo much in a republic, that he employs three different magiſtrates for driving them firſt from the markets, then from the towns, and afterwards from the territory *. If that philoſopher were now to reappear, and witneſs how many, in the different monaſtic orders, live entirely on alms, he muſt ſuppoſe that the human underſtanding had ſuffered a conſiderable decline.

The Greek authors pretend, that Egypt had five or ſix different legiſlators; and as ſuch they conſider *Amaſis*, who preceded only a few years the fall of the monarchy. It appears, however, that all the general laws were much more ancient than the Greeks believed; and what they aſſert muſt have proceeded entirely from their being very rigorouſly obſerved under certain princes, whoſe names are not exactly known. Pharaoh *Bocchoris*, ſaid by Diodorus to have been a very celebrated lawgiver, was not even known to Herodotus. Thus it becomes impoſſible to place the laws of Egypt in any chronological arrangement;

* De Legibus, dial. xi.

which,

which, however neglected by Nicolai and Caſal, is very important, in order to trace the progreſs of legiſlation *.

Sabaccon, for example, is ſaid to have aboliſhed in every caſe the puniſhment of death; becauſe he preferred condemning priſoners to work for the public. By theſe means, their ſufferings were longer, but leſs ſevere; and although not ſo ſtriking, they became more uſeful. Yet long afterwards, in the reign of *Amaſis*, we find death inflicted on thoſe, who, averſe to work, and deſtitute of fortune, ſubſiſted by that ſpecies of induſtry which is common to rogues and beggars. By ſuppoſing all this to be fact, the juriſprudence of Egypt would appear to have been aſtoniſhingly variable. But in fact Sabaccon never had any pretenſions either to humanity or generoſity. According to all hiſtorians he was a uſurper; and if he really did not cauſe Pharaoh Bocchoris to be committed to the flames, at leaſt *Nekos*, the father of *Pſammetichus*, was ſlain by his orders; and Pſammetichus would have ſhared a ſimilar fate had he not fled to Syria. Sabaccon was, therefore, far from being the mildeſt man of his age; and Strabo informs us that, inſtead of condemning the culpable to works of public utility, he cut their noſes, and baniſhed them from Egypt. Thus it is ſuppoſed to have been during his reign, that an eſtabliſhment was formed, called Rhi-

* Nicolai has written a treatiſe, with the title of, *De Ægyptiorum Synedris & Legibus inſignioribus*. But it is neceſſarily very confined, becauſe the author never underſtood the ſpirit of any law. His work is, therefore, leſs read than even that of Caſal, which contains at leaſt ſome ſingular monuments.

noculure,

nocolure, or men without noſes; but this muſt be conſidered as fabulous. The word *rhinocolure* ſeems to have referred to an opening in the coaſt, as appears in the map, where a promontory moſt probably had ſunk down. In geography, the Arabs term *raaf*, or noſe, what we call *cape* after the Italians.

Thoſe who laviſh encomiums on a princeſs, becauſe ſhe never cauſed any perſon to ſuffer death, although a prodigious number have been mutilated in her reign, may likewiſe, perhaps, praiſe Sabaccon, who cannot be ſaid to have done any other laudable action than that of abdicating the crown, and returning to Ethiopia, whence he came. Yet he was not the inventor of mutilation. It had been long preſcribed by the laws of the country for different miſdemeanors, and in this ſome have pretended to diſcover a remarkable conformity between the Egyptians and Chineſe. The amputation of the leg at the knee, a puniſhment inflicted anciently in China, was never practiſed among the Egyptians, who cut off other members, ſuch as the tongue, hands, noſe; and, according to ſome authors, the very genitals. It would be ſuperfluous to repeat here what we have already ſaid, to prove that this could never have been the origin of the eunuchs of the palace, who ſuffered mutilation in childhood, before they were capable of deſerving ſuch dreadful chaſtiſements.

Several nations of Europe, Africa, and Aſia, have had recourſe to various kinds of mutilation for certain crimes, which, according to their manner of thinking, did not deſerve capital puniſhment. Thus

no particular reſemblance can be admitted in this point between the Egyptians and the Chineſe. The latter, ever ſince the origin of their empire, have permitted malefactors, in certain caſes, to commute their penalties for money. This firſt abuſe introduced another in China, where poverty, or avarice, induces wretches to ſupport floggings for thoſe culprits who have money to pay for ſubſtitutes. The judge wiſhes to exhibit a puniſhment, and provided he finds any body to endure it, it is indifferent in his eyes what perſon preſents himſelf for the purpoſe. In Egypt nobody was allowed to purchaſe with money a diſcharge from corporal chaſtiſements decreed by the law, and much leſs could any miſerable wretches be placed under the hands of the executioner, inſtead of the real culprits. Thus the Chineſe are, perhaps, the only people in the world, who buy and ſell puniſhments; and among them, as Mr. Salmon juſtly obſerves, the firſt notions of juſtice are perverted, while all its formalities are rigidly obſerved *.

When ſo many pecuniary fines were inflicted in the time of the lower empire, nothing more was neceſſary to characterize a bad government. The commutations for money, ſo frequent in the codes of barbarians, prove equally a moſt defective juriſprudence. The Egyptians confined pecuniary fines to one ſingle caſe, which was that of having inconſi-

* Preſent State of China, vol. i. Father le Comte ſays, that near all the tribunals people are found who hire themſelves to receive chaſtiſement in the place of criminals. The judge muſt certainly firſt of all be corrupted.

derately

derately deſtroyed any of the ſacred animals protected by the law. But it was always a capital offence to kill the ibis and the vulture. This latter is privileged alſo by the Engliſh; and it was of more utility in ancient Egypt than all the other birds and quadrupedes together. Had not the Thracians and the Greeks inflicted ſimilar puniſhments on thoſe who took away the life of a ſtork or an ox, the conduct of the Egyptians would be unexampled. Yet no precedent could render it entirely excuſable. When any practice, very trifling in appearance, may be found derogatory to the public good, the legiſlature has a thouſand means of remedying it, without having recourſe to torture. The Tuſcan law, which inflicted arbitrary penalties on thoſe who deſtroyed their own bees by means of ſulphur, was altogether ineffectual; and experience proves that ſuch meaſures never aboliſhed a pernicious cuſtom in any country.

It is our intention here to ſpeak only of the abuſe which each perſon may make of public property, or even of what he himſelf poſſeſſes. We do not pretend to develope the atrocious game-laws, ſtill ſubſiſting in ſo many places of Europe, where the killing of a roe-buck is ſufficient to occaſion the death of a man, and the infamy of a family. This barbarity originated from a race of men, who anciently lived chiefly by the chaſe, and whoſe juriſprudence ſhould have been reformed, when they began to cultivate the ground.

The Egyptians had very ſevere laws againſt unfair dealing. They imagined in their purgatory, or

amenthis,

amenthis, an avenging genius for each ſpecies of crime committed in the world *; and yet they were accuſed of fraudulent practices in commerce. This however was imputed to them by the Greeks alone, who were a thouſand times more notorious for ſuch vices, and whoſe bad faith will never ceaſe to be proverbial among mankind. Egypt at one time, ſays Strabo, perſiſted in not opening its ports to the ſhips of Greece and Thrace; and it was then, continues he, that the Greeks filled Europe with calumnies againſt the government of the Pharaohs, who, content with the productions of their own country, would no longer either give or receive. But Plato, who apparently had ſome traffic in Egypt, begins by ſhowing that a nation ſhould cultivate arithmetical knowledge; and then, after ſome common-place remarks, he inſinuates ſlily, that the Phenicians and Egyptians had made an ill uſe of the knowledge they had acquired in calculating and meaſuring. Independently of this ſubtlety, it has been obſerved, that ſeveral nations of the ſouth of Aſia and Africa have always had an extreme inclination for uſury, equivocal contracts, monopolies, and that ſpecies of roguery which characterizes the Jews in Europe. They in fact have given a great extenſion to the precepts of Deuteronomy, which are more conformable to the ancient Nomandic juriſprudence than to that of Egypt. Moſes was forced to reſpect certain uſages already obſerved among the Hebrews, previous to their being

* This might have occaſioned the great diverſity of torments, which the Greeks and Romans ſuppoſed to be employed in their hell.

reduced

reduced to a ſtate of bondage. They were very ſimilar to thoſe eſtabliſhed among the Arabs, who have always been famous for their defective laws, and the ſingularity of their crimes, ſome of which, like *ſcopeliſm*, are ſufficient to render a whole province deſert *.

Many regulations were invented in Egypt to repreſs uſury, and prevent the violent meaſures of money-lenders. The greatneſs of the evil is evident from the very remedy. Among people who have much internal traffic, and ſcarcely any with ſtrangers, the merchants can only have ſmall profit on their wares; and, therefore, they endeavour to gain largely on money. This produces uſury, and the evil increaſes greatly, when bullion is uſed inſtead of coin. We ſhall find this to have been the caſe with the Egyptians, who anciently had only an interior commerce. They had not a ſingle ſhip at ſea, while the Nile was covered with a multitude of boats, ſome of which were made of baked earth. The ſcarcity of wood there was always extreme, but not more ſo than the degree of induſtry it occaſioned †.

We are ignorant of the revolutions ſuſtained by commerce at different times in Egypt; but agricul-

* *Scopeliſm* conſiſted in placing ſome ſtones in the middle of a field, to notify that the firſt perſon who attempted to till it would be aſſaſſinated. This crime is ſaid to have been peculiar to the Arabs; and it is the conſequence of their defective civil laws reſpecting murder, and the avengers of blood.

† Theſe barks were the ſmalleſt kind of *phaſeli*, called *barri* by the Egyptians; they went with ſails and oars.

Parvula fictilibus ſolitum dare vela phaſelis,
Et brevibus pictæ remis incumbere teſtæ. Juvenal.

ture

ture appears to have been at all periods very flouriſhing. The ſoil required ſcarcely any other expence than what was neceſſary for ſeed; and ſome grains, ſuch as the *doura*, or millet, like the *orinthis* in Ethiopia, multiply there moſt abundantly. Tillage was no-where attended with fewer difficulties; and little labor was neceſſary in conveying moiſture to the plantations with machines reſembling chain-pumps, which Diodorus ſeems to have confounded with the ſcrew of Archimedes; who went, ſays he, to teach that diſcovery to the Egyptians. The fields, however, were well watered there, long before the days of Archimedes, whoſe ſcrew-pump is at this day totally unknown from Cairo to the Cataract of the Nile. Thus we perceive how eaſy it was for the huſbandmen of Egypt to repair their loſſes, after having ſuffered under tyrants, whoſe hatred to the laws extended afterwards to the inhabitants. In our climates, on the contrary, agriculture is attended with much greater expence in men, cattle, and inſtruments. When the farmers are half ruined by impoſts, they can never recover themſelves by the crops; for it is demonſtrated, that the lands always bear leſs in proportion as the property of the cultivator increaſes. Reiterated labor and manure require conſiderable expenditure; but articles of that nature, ſo important with us, are ſcarcely counted for any thing in Egypt. This explains clearly why that country has ſupported better than any other the deſtructive government of the Turks; and for the ſame reaſon it might be rendered flouriſhing in a century, while

while more than three hundred years would be requiſite to produce the ſame effect on Greece.

Although our notions concerning the ancient diviſion of lands in Egypt are very confined, yet we know with certainty, that the military portions, ſome of which conſiſted of twelve arouræ, paſſed from fathers to ſons, and not to daughters. It follows, therefore, that the Greeks ſpoke at random, when they pretended that, according to the juriſprudence of Egypt, daughters alone were obliged in every caſe to maintain their parents, when old and infirm. But the obligation in fact extended only to affording that attendance, which was out of the power of their brothers, who, in the military and ſacerdotal families, were frequently long abſent. The ſoldiers were to do duty round the palace, every ſecond year in rotation: the prieſts were liable to be ſent to Thebes to adminiſter juſtice, or to diſcharge the functions of their miniſtry; and then it was impoſſible for them to pay particular attention to what paſſed in the boſom of their families. It is not neceſſary to repeat here what has been already ſaid of the condition of the women in Egypt, nor the laws relative to polygamy, and the degrees of affinity which prevented marriage. We have clearly proved that the union of brother and ſiſter never took place there, until after the death of Alexander. All the authors who ſpeak of that circumſtance, ſuch as Diodorus, Philo, Seneca, and Pauſanias, are very modern in compariſon with the ancient Egyptians. Philo, however, is the only one who pretends that ſuch marriages

could be contracted even between a brother and his twin ſiſter *. We find, therefore, that this Jew imagined twins to be more cloſely related than brothers and ſiſters born ſucceſſively. But the idea was altogether chimerical, and it would have been abſurd to make this exception, when all the Greeks of Alexandria were permitted to intermarry in the firſt degree of the collateral lines. Twins have nothing to diſtinguiſh them from other children born of the ſame father and mother, except that one of them is ſometimes weakly; and yet this does not happen ſo conſtantly that it can be conſidered as a rule of Nature. Yet if degeneration reſults from inceſtuous connexion, the effect muſt be moſt obvious on the offspring of a brother and ſiſter who are twins, although ſuch experiments, when made with brutes, have ſeldom produced any remarkable effects.

Ancient authors would never have laviſhed ſo many praiſes on the legiſlation of Egypt, had they been ſenſible of the imperfections of their own. We allude here to perſonal ſlavery, which requires neceſſarily ſo many bad laws, that even the good are corrupted; for one great injuſtice requires to be ſupported by many others. It ſhould be eſtabliſhed as

* De Spec. Leg. 6. 7.—Selden believed that marriage between brother and ſiſter was firſt known in Egypt under the Perſians: but this is an error. The inceſt of Cambyſes did not concern the Egyptians; and Seneca gives us diſtinctly to underſtand, that no perſon married his ſiſter, except in Alexandria.

an

an eternal truth and an immutable principle, that ſlavery is contrary to the law of Nature. Thus we may form an opinion of thoſe legiſlators, who uſed their authority and ſanction to confirm, inſtead of aboliſhing, the abuſe. No Egyptian had the power of taking away the life of his ſlave; and, by drawing a few conſequences from this law, the eyes of thoſe, who had fallen into ſuch ſtrange contradictions, ſhould have been opened.

As liberty and life are really inſeparable, the maſter always preſerved the power of death while he appeared to be reſtrained by the law. Few men in any age have been guilty of murdering their ſlaves, but thoſe who cauſed them to periſh ſlowly by hard labour were always very numerous. Thus we find that the law can only prevent a maſter from killing his ſlaves in one manner, while he has the choice of a thouſand others; and in this conſiſts the contradiction.

Every thing relative to freedom by birth among the Egyptians was entirely oppoſite to the inſtitutions of the Romans, who adopted the abominable maxim, that children ſhould follow the condition of their mothers: but in all countries where polygamy is eſtabliſhed, it becomes indiſpenſable that they ſhould receive their rank from their father. No nation had ever more imperfect ideas concerning ſervitude than the Romans. By the Claudian ſenatus-conſultum, we find a woman was liable to loſe her liberty (a puniſhment equal to death), when convicted of any illicit connexion with a ſlave.

The ſituations of thoſe reduced to ſlavery in Egypt were anciently very different; for ſome, we perceive diſtinctly, had employments in the houſes, whilſt others, appointed to till the fields, might be compared to our ſerfs. As the greater part conſiſted of ſtrangers, either purchaſed or made captives, it was neceſſary to keep them apart, as long as they perſiſted in their own religion. If admitted as houſehold ſervants, they would have rendered every thing impure. This inſtitution was, in its nature, ſo very defective, that it required many bad laws to prevent revolts among ſuch people, who could the more eaſily form conſpiracies as they were not under the eye of their maſter. It is probable that this occaſioned ſo many extraordinary regulations to prevent murder; and we ſee, by the caſe of Moſes, that they were not inſtituted without reaſon, although unexampled among the reſt of mankind. In other countries, not to aſſiſt a perſon againſt aſſaſſins is conſidered as cowardice; but in Egypt it was a capital crime *. The law for that object, however, could ſo eaſily be eluded, that it muſt have been looked upon as non-extant. Nothing was eaſier than to allege numberleſs pretexts, to prove the impoſſibility of ſuccouring an unfortunate man, already in the hands of robbers. The legiſlators, ſenſible of the greateſt part of theſe inconveniencies, propoſed that the perſon, at leaſt, who did not de-

* Heliodorus ſeems to inſinuate, that the ſame law was found among the Ethiopians, and that it concerned even the children who were found, when expoſed to periſh.

nounce

nounce the aggreſſors, ſhould remain ſome time in priſon, and receive a certain number of ſtripes. But this law appears to have been annulled under the Ptolemies, when they entruſted the compoſition of their code to Demetrius of Phaleris, who, as every perſon knows, had to labor for monſters.

It is generally conſidered as a very whimſical circumſtance, that the Egyptians ſhould have had particular phyſicians for different diſorders, and even for the tooth-ach, to which they were ſubject from chewing green ſugar-canes; while the whole country did not contain one barriſter, although the pleadings were delivered in writing, according to the Greeks. In that caſe, however, the prieſts, who were found in all the towns, muſt have drawn up the petitions and replies for thoſe who could not read and write; but, in that point, the Egyptians in general ſeem not to have been deficient *. When the bad cuſtom of citing a heap of authors in juridical caſes is not adopted, and no captious reaſonings are introduced, ſuch papers can be diſcuſſed very promptly, and the Egyptians were never allowed to preſent more than four in the courſe of one proceſs. The judges, on their ſide, conſulted only ten volumes, and of theſe they com-

* According to the Egyptian laws, it was a great advantage to be able to read and write; and even artiſans gave this part of education to their children. The Judaic laws ſuppoſed alſo the frequent uſe of writing, as well for the genealogies of the tribes as for contracts, bills of divorce, &c. But the Jews neglected education greatly; and, in ſome of the ſmall towns, the *ſchoterim* were the only people who could read or write.

mitted the greater part to memory *. Extraordinary caſes, which had no place in this code, were decided by a plurality of voices; and it appears, by the monument now extant in Thebais, that the number of judges was uneven. Thus the preſident did not turn the image of Truth to either ſide, unleſs when the votes were equally divided. It would have been abſurd to decide in favor of thoſe who had not obtained this equality, becauſe the arbitrary procedure, which was chiefly intended to be avoided, would then have been admitted. The plurality of ſuffrages attracted always to their ſide the emblem of Truth; and in that manner the proceſs was terminated. No baſtinadoes were ever given there to the pleaders. But the Chineſe ſmother more law-ſuits than they decide judicially; becauſe their government is deſpotic, and that of the Egyptians was monarchic, as may be demonſtrated beyond contradiction.

It appears alſo, that, among the Egyptians, ſome points were referred to oath; and not one word in their whole hiſtory gives reaſon to ſuppoſe that they ever employed torture. Under the dominion of the Greeks and Romans, experience proved that ſuch means were ineffectual to obtain a confeſſion from people, whoſe obſtinacy was exceſſive. Thus an inſtitution, which is abominable in any country, would have been uſeleſs in Egypt. Men of melancholy and gloomy

* Diodorus ſpeaks only of eight volumes to which the judges applied; but here two volumes are ſpoken of, which the prophets had to ſtudy.

conſti-

conſtitutions, when expoſed to a violent degree of pain, ſoon loſe all ſenſibility: they ſuffer leſs in proportion as the convulſion augments; and it was perhaps from phyſical cauſes, that the Egyptians rejected the torments of hell, and believed only in purgatory. As, in certain caſes, ſolemn depoſitions were admitted as proofs of facts, it became neceſſary to place perjury in the number of capital crimes. Murder belonged always to the ſame claſs, except when a father killed his own child; and then his puniſhment conſiſted in holding publicly the dead body in his arms during three days: but the parricide had to ſuffer the moſt dreadful execution ever exhibited in that country *. This likewiſe has been ſuppoſed, without reaſon, to diſcover ſome connexion with what is practiſed by the Chineſe. The greater part of ancient nations entertained ſimilar ſentiments; and we have to lament that ſome ſhould have been ſo barbarous and unjuſt as to chaſtiſe imaginary crimes, ſuch as hereſy and ſorcery, by more cruel puniſhments than thoſe inflicted on the depraved wretch who plunged a dagger into the heart of a parent. On the other hand, the Egyptians were certainly to blame for not preſerving ſome proportion in the manner of teſtifying the abhorrence of the murder of a father and of a ſon. When Nature has eſtabliſhed an evident relation, it ſhould always be

* This puniſhment conſiſted in piercing the body of the criminal with reeds, and burning him in thorns. It has no reſemblance whatever to the method of cutting a perſon into a thouſand pieces, practiſed in China, where it is ſuppoſed to be a more modern invention.

reſpected by the legiſlator. We muſt however acknowledge, that the notions of the Egyptians, with regard to paternal authority, were leſs defective than thoſe of the Greeks and Romans. But the Chineſe appear to have always had the ſhocking maxim, that children ſhould not be conſidered as human beings, until they had received their mothers' milk. This opinion, according to a learned lawyer, prevailed likewiſe among the ancient Romans *; and it appears no difficult matter to aſſign the cauſe. Infanticide could be committed only by the father, according to the decree of Romulus, and then with the conſent of the mother. From this proceeded the barbarous diſtinction between children who had ſucked, and thoſe never admitted to the breaſt. When the mother once began to nurſe her child, ſhe was conſidered as intending to preſerve it; and then infanticide could no longer be allowed even with the conſent of both parties. Thoſe, who poſſeſſed ſuch bad morals, muſt neceſſarily have had worſe phyſics; and the prejudice was thus eſtabliſhed, that children began to be human beings only when they received the breaſt.

The great deference ſhown by the Egyptians towards old men, was common to all the moſt ancient nations of the earth. It is the only reſpect known in ſavage life; and civil government originated through its influence, and not from paternal authority, which could never extend beyond a family. Royalty is de-

* Ger. Noodt, de Partus Expoſitione et Nece apud Veteres. Liber ſingularis.

rived

rived from the power of the caciques, or captains, choſen by the old men to command expeditions where they themſelves could not act. This appeared to me moſt evidently, when my ſtudies were directed to trace the origin of ſocial life in America, where, from being more modern, it is leſs obſcure.

As the ancient inhabitants of our continent in general have given by far too much latitude to paternal power; had this, inſtead of the authority of the old men, been the foundation of government, a real deſpotiſm would have reſulted in the ſtate, as well as in each family. Yet we find no ſuch effects in any country; and, if the Chineſe pretend the contrary, they are groſsly miſtaken. When one hundred and twenty kings, or great caciques, reigned in China, not one of them all dared to call himſelf *father and mother of the ſtate:* but as ſoon as the emperors, by force of arms and every ſpecies of injuſtice, had expelled the kings, they aſſumed whatever titles ſuited their fancy. Thus the caſe of the Chineſe was exactly the ſame with that of the Romans; when they had *fathers of the country*, their liberty was gone. Let all the dictionaries and languages of the world be examined, and they cannot lead to the ſlighteſt idea that ever, unleſs in a figurative ſenſe, the title of *king* had any connexion with that of *father*.

The government of ancient Egypt was really monarchic by the form of its conſtitution. Limits were fixed to the ſovereign power; the order of ſucceſſion in the royal family was regulated, and the adminiſtration of juſtice entruſted to a particular body, whoſe credit

credit could counterbalance the authority of the Pharaohs. The king had no right to judge or pronounce in any civil cauſe, and the judges, at their inſtallation, contracted the moſt ſolemn engagement not to obey him, in caſe he ordered them to iſſue an unjuſt ſentence. Beſides the college of thirty, ſtationary at Thebes, and the particular magiſtrates of towns who pronounced in certain caſes *, the provinces ſent deputies at times to meet in the labyrinth, and diſcuſs affairs of ſtate, ſuppoſed to be relative to taxation. Diodorus Siculus aſſures us, that the kings of Egypt could not tax their ſubjects arbitrarily, which, he obſerves, is the greateſt ſcourge of other ſtates; and then he inſinuates, that the ſacerdotal claſs had the inſpection of the finances. This leaves room to ſuppoſe, that the conſent of the provinces was neceſſary for levying new impoſts.

We now ſee the error of maintaining, that the ancients had no idea of true monarchical government. Mr. Monteſquieu perceived no traces of it among them, becauſe he did not look where they were to be found; and he ſtops to conſider the kings of ſome ſtates of ancient Greece, who pronounced ſentences in civil cauſes. But this uſage, ſo oppoſite to the

* Anciently, ſays Orus Apollo, the magiſtrates of Egypt judged and ſaw the king naked—*Regem nudum ſpectabat.* The meaning of this is obſcure; and Mr. de Pauw, canon of Utrecht, does not ſeem to have underſtood the 39th chapter of Hieroglyphics, on which he has given notes. When the king came to the aſſembly of judges, he had to lay aſide his cloak or upper garment, called *calaſiris;* probably, to ſhow that he did not judge himſelf.

principles

principles of monarchy, was never practiſed in Egypt. We ſpeak here of the actions of princes, and not of tyrants.

According to a fundamental law in that country, royalty was incompatible with the pontificate*. When the ſervile deſpotiſm of the nations inhabiting warm climates is conſidered, as well as what the men of ſuch countries dare attempt, and how much they can ſuffer, we are led to admire the wiſdom of the Egyptians in oppoſing this barrier to deſpotiſm. The want of ſimilar precautions brought ruin on the nations of Aſia, where the princes got poſſeſſion of the prieſthood, or rendered it removable, as in Turkey and Perſia. The muftis and ſudres are as little certain of preſerving their dignity, as the high-prieſts of the Jews, who, towards the cloſe of that monarchy, ſeldom held the prieſthood during three years. Such ſlaves are incapable of defending the rights of the people, becauſe they cannot protect themſelves; and if their deſtiny did not depend on the caprice of the prince, it would be determined by the intrigues of the ſeraglio. In Egypt, on the contrary, the pontiffs were always permanent, and the eldeſt ſon conſtantly ſucceeded his father in that office, nearly in the ſame manner that it remained in the family of Aaron, before the Hebrews became the ſport of deſpots.

* As Herodotus ſaw the ſtatues of all the kings, and thoſe of all the pontiffs in particular, it may be conſidered as a proof that, before the time of *Sethon*, no pontiff was ever king. Perhaps, *Sethon* would not abdicate the pontificate when he came to the throne.

At

At length, however, from ſome cauſe unknown to us, it happened in Egypt that Sethon, who inherited the prieſthod, attained the throne likewiſe. The two powers being thus united in the ſame perſon, the ſtate became ſo completely overturned, that it could never afterwards be replaced in its former equilibrium. The ſoldiers murmured, becauſe ſome of their lands were confiſcated; and the people complained that the military had betrayed the country at a moment when particular intereſts ſhould have yielded to the public good. In the midſt of theſe troubles, that the maſs of power might be divided, twelve governors were choſen to reign jointly. But this oligarchic conſtitution could not re-eſtabliſh the monarchy, becauſe it was never effectual even in a republic, although ſo frequently tried in ancient times. The reſult of this was real deſpotiſm, which continued from the time of *Pſammetichus* to the invaſion of Cambyſes. All thoſe princes kept in pay a crowd of mercenaries, who, ever ſince the world exiſted, have been the inſtruments and ſupport of arbitrary power. At this epoch ſhould be fixed the evident change which took place in the character of the Egyptians, who then began to hate their kings. Even *Amaſis*, to whom they were in appearance reconciled, had to keep a ſtrong Greek garriſon in Memphis, to guard himſelf in the midſt of his dominions againſt ſubjects, who had once been enthuſiaſtic in their attachment to the Pharaohs. They pardoned many vices and weakneſſes in thoſe princes, and even allowed them to reign, when deprived of ſight, as we find from ſeveral inſtances; for the Egyptians

tians were much afflicted with cecity. It is ſurpriſing that in other eaſtern empires, particularly in Perſia, Mogul, and Turkey, where the blind might be capable of governing, a quite contrary regulation has been eſtabliſhed. Were any thing of the kind now to happen in the monarchies of Europe, the lawyers would moſt probably be puzzled to ſolve the difficulty; but the Egyptians founded their conduct on birth-right, which, among them, was ſacred and inviolable. They conceived it therefore to be unjuſt to deprive a perſon of his patrimony on account of an indiſpoſition, already ſufficiently fatal in itſelf. This might be admitted with regard to private ſucceſſions; but, when the obligation of governing a people was annexed, they ſhould at leaſt have given tutors to their blind princes, among whom we find the children of Seſoſtris and Pharaoh Anyſis. Were we to believe Herodotus, it would appear that the cecity of the latter in particular may be conſidered as having been productive of misfortunes; for it was in his reign that the Perſians invaded Egypt *.

When the reigning family was extinct, the crown became elective; and we have all the formilities uſed on ſuch occaſions minutely deſcribed by Syneſius. The ſoldiers and prieſts alone had active and paſſive votes, although Diodorus pretends that the reſt of the

* The name of Pharaoh Anyſis is not found in the dynaſties of Manetho, becauſe it was merely borrowed. Bocchoris is generally believed to be the ſame perſon with Anyſis. Cecity, however, was not incurable in Egypt, and this might have influenced the legiſlator.

people

people were equally noble with the military and ſacerdotal tribes. But he ſhould at leaſt have excepted that unfortunate claſs, ſo much deteſted in Egypt, and not even permitted to enter the temples. We have already ſpoken of thoſe men, who appear to me to have been Africans of a foreign origin. They ſpoke amongſt themſelves the Punic language, and were held by the Egyptians in a ſtate between perſonal ſlavery and liberty. This was likewiſe the caſe with the Helots at Lacedæmon, the Corynophores at Sicyon, the Peneſtes in Theſſaly, the Clarotes in Crete, the Gymnites in different parts of Greece, the Proſpelates in Arcadia, the Leleges in Caria, the Mariandynes at Heraclea, and finally the Jews, who, after the expulſion of the ſhepherd kings, were exactly in the ſame condition. Herodotus ſays poſitively, that the Punic language was ſpoken in the neighbourhood of the town of Apis, and the lake Mareotis, amongſt certain families ſubjected to the Egyptians *. This caſt, ſo much abhorred by the Egyptians, formed at length, according to every opinion, the republic of robbers; and Strabo deſcribes the little monarchy of the Jews as degenerated likewiſe into a confederation of banditti. We have reaſon to believe, that ſlaves, employed in cultivating the earth, are liable to contract a peculiarly bad character. Several ſocieties have

* The language ſpoken of here muſt not be confounded with the Carthaginians. It was properly the Libyan idiom. As the Egyptians came originally from Ethiopia, they neither underſtood Arabic, Libyan, Phenician, nor the jargon of the Jews, which ſeems to have been a dialect of the latter.

been

been formed in America by negroes, who eſcaped from the planters; but their policy and laws are always ſo wretched, that, like the Pauliſts, they become republics of thieves.

As the military in Egypt were far more numerous than the prieſts of the firſt and ſecond rank, the prophets had a vote equal to one hundred ſoldiers, the comaſtæ to twenty, and the zacori to ten *. All the meaſures taken to procure tranquillity in thoſe critical times, when the ſtate floated between contending parties, could not prevent the elections from being frequently diſturbed by the intrigues of the candidates. Some traces of this confuſion are ſuppoſed to be found in the hiſtory of the ſeventy Pharaohs, who reigned during as many days, probably from having diſputed concerning the plurality of votes. This ſtory could not have been founded, as people pretend, on an irruption of foreign enemies, who in leſs than three months inflicted death on ſeventy of the governors of Egypt. The whole number of prefectories did not exceed twenty-ſeven, as we perceive by the conſtruction of the labyrinth, where the deputies of the different nomes aſſembled, previouſly to the conqueſt of the Perſians †.

* *Prolato alicujus ex candidatis nomine, militis quidem manus tollunt, comaſtæ vero et zacori et prophetæ calculos ferunt; pauci aliqui; ſed quorum præcipua eſt ea in re auctoritas, prophetarum nempe; calculus centum manus æquat. Comaſtarum viginti, zacororum decem.* Syn. de Providen.

† This number is found in all the copies of Strabo; but, in my opinion, the nomes conſiſted only of twelve great, and as many ſmall.

In

In very ancient times, the kings were conſecrated at Thebes; but that ſtrange ceremony was afterwards performed at Memphis. The prince carried the yoke of the bull *Apis*, and a ſceptre made like the Theban plough, uſed at this day in cultivating the fields of Sais, and ſome parts of Arabia, as we find by the figure publiſhed by Mr. Niebuhr *. Thus equipped, he was led through a part of the town, and thence to the *Adyton*, which ſeems to have been a vault. Father Martini, by the moſt whimſical idea poſſible, ſuppoſes it to have been the town of *Abydus*, eighty-three leagues diſtant from Memphis. That man muſt have imagined that the ſame mode prevailed in Egypt as in his own country, where the kings go from Paris to Rheims to be conſecrated.

When a prince was elected from the military claſs, he paſſed, at the moment of his inauguration, into the prieſthood, and this required ſome particular ceremonies moſt probably as well as oaths. The Pharaohs could in no caſe diſpenſe, as we have already obſerved, with ſwearing that they would neither intercalate a day nor a month in the undetermined year, to render it fixed or lunary. In this point they kept

* Scholiaſt. German. in Arat. The Scholia of Ariſtophanes, on the Comedy of the Birds, ſay, that, on the top of the ſceptre of the Egyptian kings, was the figure of a ſtork, and, on the other end, the figure of a hippopotamus. But they ſeem to have had different kinds of ſceptres, according to what is handed down by the ancients; and the moſt common of all repreſented a plough. This was carried by the kings, as well as by the prieſts of Egypt and Ethiopia.

their

their word more religiouſly than in many others of much greater conſequence.

As thoſe, who attained the throne by the voice of the ſoldiers and prieſts, always gave the name of the town where they were born, and not that of their family, to the new dynaſty, it is not extraordinary to find in hiſtory the Pharaohs of Elephantis. Chronologiſts, by not attending to this natural fact, have been forced to invent a particular monarchy in the little iſland of Elephantis, which was not more extenſive than a country-ſeat in Europe with walks and gardens. The valley of Egypt grows very narrow immediately above the town of Ombos; and by even allowing this pretended kingdom all the territory on the banks of the Nile, it could never be independent either of the kings of Ethiopia or of Egypt.

Marſham is the firſt author who ever pretended, that Egypt conſiſted anciently of ſeveral kingdoms; and it is to be lamented, that a man, who had acquired ſo much erudition, ſhould have been deficient in genius and judgment. He was perſecuted by fanatics as an unbeliever; and never was any man more credulous; for he pretended that the Egyptian monarchy had been founded in the year immediately following the deluge; and what he relates of *Cham*, who is called by him the firſt king of the Egyptians, is more worthy of a Jewiſh rabbin than an Engliſh chronologiſt. Neither *Cham* nor *Meſtraim* was ever ſpoken of in ancient Egypt, which undoubtedly derives its name from the word *Kypt*; and De Hoorn believes, that the ſame appellation was common to a

part of Ethiopia *. Unfortunately, too many writer have introduced Jewiſh traditions into hiſtory; and, from that circumſtance, the progreſs of knowledge has been greatly retarded.

The Egyptians undoubtedly in ſome points exaggerated their antiquity. When they ſpeak of perſons who lived a thouſand years, it is clear, ſays Pliny, that they at firſt counted by lunations †. But, in fact, the period attributed to the life of one perſon might be the duration of a dynaſty or family, according to the manner of ſpeaking in the Eaſt. Let it be ſuppoſed, that the tribe of *Beni-Waſſel* had been ſcattered throughout the heights of Thebais during ſix centuries; the Arabs, who never count by the lives of individuals, would ſay, that the age of *Beni-Waſſel* was ſix hundred years. This invariable manner of bearing the name of their founder, is well adapted to preſerve the epoch of a race of men, who have no archives. The ſame mode may perhaps be found among the free hordes of Tartars; but thoſe who are ſubjected, preſerve only the genealogy of their kans, whoſe families become frequently extinct.

* Bochart has abuſed De Hoorn, without any neceſſity, concerning what he ſays of the Ethiopians. Although the Greeks coined the word *Aithiops* to denote a race of black people, the derivation of it might perhaps be concealed in the term *Kopt* or *Kypt*.

† *Annum enim alii æſtate unum determinabant et alterum hyeme. . . . Quidam lunæ ſenio ut Ægyptii, itaque apud eos aliqui et ſingula annorum vixiſſe millia produntur.* Lib. 7.—" I have decked my bed with tapeſtry and linen of Egypt." Proverbs, chap. vii.

The

The Dynaſties of Manethon, however, are not neceſſary to prove the great antiquity of the Egyptians; for it is demonſtrated by the progreſs they had made in the arts in very diſtant ages. At the conqueſt of the Macedonians, they were ſo far advanced, that nothing was wanting to the greateſt degree of perfection, but that elegance and niceneſs of taſte, which can never be attained by the inhabitants of the Eaſt, becauſe of their defective organs, and diſordered imagination. The manufactures of glaſs and tapeſtry, ſo celebrated under the Ptolemies, had been eſtabliſhed long before the days of thoſe princes; and the carpets of Egypt particularly formed part of the merchandiſe tranſported into Aſia by the iſthmus of Suez. Of this more ſhall be ſaid, when we come to examine what might have been the annual revenues of the Pharaohs, to whom the firſt legiſlators of Egypt had preſcribed many rules and maxims preſerved in the Hermetic Collection. From that book the paſſages in Diodorus were probably extracted, which declare that thoſe princes could never keep ſlaves, whether born in Egypt, or purchaſed in foreign countries. They were required to take their attendants from children of prieſts, who did not enter into the ſervice of the court until they had attained their twentieth year. This law was far from being obſerved; for when the Pharaohs introduced ſlaves into their ſeraglio, they committed them to the care of eunuchs, who were certainly neither freemen, nor choſen out of the ſacerdotal claſs. Diodorus pretends likewiſe, that the kings were obliged to peruſe all the letters they re-

ceived, to attend prayers daily, and hear ſome paſſage read in the Annals of the country. Many pretexts might however have been found for diſpenſing with ſuch ceremonies, when the allurements of pleaſure, or idleneſs, which is the greateſt enjoyment in warm climates, rendered them irkſome.

It cannot be too frequently repeated, that, in reading the hiſtory of Egypt, the laws really in force ſhould be diſtinguiſhed from the ancient inſtitutions found only in books. Had this not been the caſe, the prieſts could never have ſpoken of a long liſt of indolent kings, who ſlumbered in ſeraglios, and received, like the reſt, ſepulchral honors. We have reaſon to believe, contrary to the common opinion, that the people never poſſeſſed the right of refuſing burial. Such a cuſtom would not have produced any good effect in Egypt, where the father was always ſucceeded on the throne by his eldeſt ſon, as long as the royal family remained. In that caſe, the young prince muſt have been the implacable enemy of thoſe who refuſed to let his father be interred; and it was, beſides, an eaſy matter for him to have the mummy conveyed ſecretly into ſome vault.

Diodorus indeed ſays, that the Pharaohs, who, according to him, conſtructed the two great pyramids, had not dared to have their bodies depoſited there, through fear that they might be thrown out by the people; but this was a vulgar report, totally unknown to Herodotus. Very little reflection is neceſſary to perceive that thoſe princes muſt have had more ſenſe than to rear pyramids for their tombs, while they

they knew ſo well that their interment there was impracticable. The Greeks, having once taken into their heads that the pyramids were the tombs of the Pharaohs, would never allow themſelves to be perſuaded to the contrary, although the Egyptians declared poſitively that no corpſe of any king was ever depoſited in any of the pyramids, and that thoſe monuments were erected by the nation, and not by particular princes. Hiſtory contains one fact very deciſive in proving that the Egyptians never thought of refuſing burial to their bad kings. One of the deſpotic Pharaohs, called *Apries*, who was ſuppoſed to have committed many atrocious crimes, incurred the reſentment of the people to ſuch a great degree, that they inſiſted on having him delivered into their hands, when he was vanquiſhed by Amaſis. After he had been ſtrangled in their fury, his body was placed in the tomb of his fathers, at the entrance of the temple of the Minerva of *Sais*, where all the Pharaohs of the Saite tribe were depoſited.

The opinion hazarded by ſome modern writers, concerning the anonymous kings found in the Catalogue of Dynaſties, ſhould not be credited. They pretended that their names were ſuppreſſed, becauſe their hands had been ſullied with blood, or ill-acquired riches. As the memory of tyrants muſt be devoted to execration in every age, it would be rendering them a ſervice to efface them entirely from the annals. But the prieſts, who were not ſo ſilly, wrote both names and events with great fidelity *.

* Euſeb. Præpar. Evang. lib. 10.

Bad princes no longer fear future cenſure, ſince flattery has ſucceeded in corrupting hiſtorical faith; and this evil originated among the Greeks and Romans. If the Catalogue of the Dynaſties contains ſome anonymous perſons, that circumſtance ſhould be attributed to the negligence of the compilers. Euſebius, for example, has omitted the names of ſeveral Pharaohs preſerved by Julius Africanus; and we know to a certainty that the Hiſtory of Manethon mentions *Achthoes* as the moſt cruel and unjuſt of all the kings of Egypt. Thus we find how little the prieſts were diſpoſed to ſuppreſs the names of tyrants; otherwiſe, the monſter Achthoes muſt have been now unknown. Orus Apollo aſſures us, that, when the name of a wicked king was to be inſerted in hieroglyphical records, it was ordained to be written in alphabetical characters*. The prieſts denoted foreign uſurpers by ſymbolical terms familiar to all the people; and every Egyptian knew that the king of Perſia, called by us *Ochus*, was ſurnamed among them the *Aſs*.

According to a very ancient cuſtom, the high prieſt had to pronounce a public diſcourſe when the corpſe of a king was carried to the tomb, after a mourning of ſeventy days, which we know was the preciſe time neceſſary for the embalmers to prepare the mummy. In this harangue conſiſted the judgment

* *Regem autem peſſimum ſignificantes, anguem pingunt in orbis figuram; cujus caudam ori admovent: nomen vero regis in media revolutione ſcribunt.* Hiero, lib. 1.—Alphabetical characters are ſometimes ſeen with the hieroglyphics on the monuments; and of this what Orus ſays here is a proof.

paſſed

paſſed on the dead Pharaohs, who were praiſed for different qualities, but chiefly, as Porphyry ſays, for ſobriety, becauſe that virtue ſuppoſes many others, particularly in ſovereigns.

Private people were probably never refuſed burial, unleſs when the creditors oppoſed it juridically. This made the Greeks imagine that people were found among the Egyptians, who advanced money on an embalmed body, and that the contract was juſtified by law. This miſtake is truly ridiculous. As the want of burial was conſidered as a ſpecies of infamy, the creditor arreſted the corpſe of the debtor, and did not allow it to be buried until the relations payed the debt. Such pretenſions could be diſcuſſed before the ordinary magiſtrate of every town; and it was abſurd to ſuppoſe that one tribunal, eſtabliſhed at Memphis, had to acquit or condemn all thoſe who died in Egypt. It was beſides alleged, that the ſentence could not be pronounced until after a rigid examination of the whole life of each perſon; and this, inſtead of a ſingle tribunal, would have required one-fourth of the nation. In fact, the power of ſeizing on the dead body of a debtor was only a modification of the Egyptian law, which prevented him from being impriſoned while alive.

As the Pharaohs were generally inſtructed in the ſciences from their infancy, many of them wrote books; but they have had the misfortune to be entirely deſtroyed. This has been the caſe with ſo many of the kings of antiquity, that we are almoſt tempted to believe, that their productions were not worthy of

being preſerved. The works of Alexander the Great, of the emperor Auguſtus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Ptolemy Philometer, Archelaus, and many other princes, to whom might be added Hannibal, Lucullus, Sylla, and Mecænas, are ſo entirely loſt, that even the titles of the greater part are unknown. The leaſt part of the writings of Julius Cæſar now remain, and a kind of veneration for the memory of Marcus Aurelius and Julian has made them exceptions to the general rule. Yet, in the days of Pliny, ſome books were ſtill found with the name of *Necepſos;* but whatever Firmicus may ſay to the contrary, thoſe works ſeem to have been produced in later ages by ſome famiſhed Greek, who boldly took the name of Pharaoh *Necepſos*. That prince received the moſt pompous titles from the aſtrologers; they ſtyled him the chief of authors, and ſuperlatively learned in aſtrology, becauſe he had really written on the influence of the ſtars. His works are therefore not ſo much to be regretted as thoſe of ſome other Pharaohs, who appear to have been truly deſirous of information; yet we muſt not believe that they ever made ſuch experiments as Herodotus has attributed to *Pſammetichus*. That prince, ſays he, cauſed two infants to be reared, without having an opportunity of hearing any converſation: his object in this was to know what language the children would uſe, that he might terminate all the conteſts of the inhabitants of Egypt and Phrygia, concerning their reſpective antiquity. Herodotus was credulous enough to believe that the firſt word they ſpoke was Phrygian.

Thoſe,

Thoſe, who are deſirous of knowing the origin of this abſurd ſtory, may be ſatisfied that it was founded ſimply on the circumſtance of Pſammetichus having given ſome Egyptian children to be inſtructed in the language of the Greeks. With regard to the Phrygians, they were ridiculed with the name of *Beccoelenes*, on account of their pretended antiquity: they called themſelves older than the moon, and cited, as a proof of their pretenſions, the experiment made in Egypt, when the children uttered the word *beccos* *.

The predominating paſſion of the Pharaohs was building; and this led to the erroneous opinion of their great riches. Under their ſway no commerce was carried on either in the Mediterranean or Red Sea; and, although the Arabs and Phenicians brought caravans through the iſthmus of Suez, yet the balance of that trade was not always in favor of the Egyptians. Aſia furniſhed them with oil of olives, incenſe for the ſacrifices and fumigations, Judaic bitumen, reſin of cedar, drugs for embalming bodies, myrrh, and aromatics. Such articles were never cheap in ancient times. Thus when we ſuppoſe that the Egyptians, by means of their grain, linen, tapeſtry, glaſs, and other wrought wares, could barter with the caravans of Aſia, it was not a ſource ſufficient to enrich the kings, who levied no impoſts on the land poſſeſſed by the militia or the ſacerdotal claſs. Their only reſource was in cultivating the royal do-

* This word ſignifies bread in Phrygian, which I believe was called *bebo* in the Egyptian language. The difference between this and *beccos* was not very great.

mains,

mains, exacting a trifling toll on the Nile, and taxing to a certain degree the property of private perſons. The commerce of Ethiopia was certainly very advantageous for the Egyptian merchants, who received thence great quantities of gold duſt, part of which now paſſes to the weſtern coaſt of Africa; ſome circulates in Barbary; and the reſt ſtill comes to Cairo. Mr. Maillet, however, exaggerates greatly, when he calculates the gold tranſported annually into Egypt by the Numidian caravans at twelve hundred quintals. Boſman ſays poſitively, that, in his time, all the coaſt of Guinea afforded only ſeven thouſand marks, which Mr. Maillet, or his compiler, the abbé Maſcrier, has converted into quintals *. The ancients amplified nearly in the ſame proportion what related to Arabia Felix: that poor and barren country has frequently excited admiration in the inhabitants of other countries, who would loſe prodigiouſly by an exchange.

Nothing is more uncertain than the exiſtence of thoſe gold mines, ſaid to have been poſſeſſed by the kings of Egypt. Hecateus eſtimates their product, in his common way, at an incredible ſum; and Diodorus places them on the confines of Arabia, Ethiopia, and Egypt. Their ſituation muſt therefore have been nearly the ſame with that of the emerald mines, and, conſequently, beyond the territory of the Egyptians. That diſtrict belonged either to the Troglodytes or Ethiopians: and it was really the latter who collected the gold among the ſand of rivers and torrents, or

* Deſcription of Egypt, part ii.

procured

procured it in the manner now practiſed by the Africans.

In fact, the revenues of the Pharaohs were far from amounting to twelve hundred thouſand pounds ſterling annually, prior to the reign of *Pſammetichus*, who made great changes in the finances, and in commerce. Under the Ptolemies, Egypt had the whole commerce of India, of the eaſtern coaſt of Africa, Arabia, and Ethiopia, beſides what was derived from the navigation of the Mediterranean. Yet the annual revenue of Ptolemy Auletes did not exceed two millions four hundred and twenty-two thouſand pounds. But, as that prince was ſaid to have neglected his finances more than any of his predeceſſors, we ſhall examine the ſtate of the revenues under Ptolemy Philadelphus, when Egypt, according to hiſtorians, was exceedingly flouriſhing.

Philadelphus received every year two millions eight hundred and ſixty-ſeven thouſand pounds in money, and fifteen millions of ſmall meaſures of wheat *. Thus from his reign to that of Ptolemy Auletes, father to Cleopatra, the derangement of the finances had produced a diminution of only four hundred and forty-five thouſand pounds. This was far from being an object ſo conſiderable as Strabo pretends; and Philadelphus muſt have had other important poſſeſſions out of Egypt, otherwiſe he could never have maintained ſuch an army as is mentioned by Appian †.

* Iero on the ninth Chapter of Daniel. The number of meaſures of grain ſeems exaggerated.

† Præf. ad Libros Bellor. Civil.

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The regiſters of the court of Alexandria make the whole armed force to have conſiſted of two hundred and forty thouſand men, who, if maintained and paid as at the preſent day, would have conſumed three millions and a half annually. It is very poſſible that the troops were not ſo numerous; for, beſides the ſuſpicions ſuggeſted by Polybius, many are perſuaded that Appian doubled the real number of horſes. That man was born in Alexandria, and he lied for the honor of his country.

When Egypt was ſhut towards the Arabian gulph, as well as the Mediterranean, the revenues of the Pharaohs could never have amounted to twelve hundred thouſand pounds. It ſhould be obſerved, that the Ptolemies ſeem to have reſerved the commerce of India for their private advantage; and the wares of others had to pay very heavy duties at different ports on the Nile. Thus Philadelphus received the greateſt part of his riches from another ſource than Egypt, which did not then contain more than three millions of inhabitants. Joſephus was guilty of an unpardonable error in making its population amount to eight millions in the reign of Nero, after all the miſeries the country had ſuffered under the laſt Ptolemies and the firſt Cæſars.

We do not here make any allowance for the difference which ſome have imagined in the value of ſpecie; for it muſt then have been nearly the ſame as at preſent. The quantity is now indeed much greater; but the circulation has alſo become far more extenſive than in former times. When Philadelphus reigned

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in Egypt, the uſe of gold and ſilver was ſcarcely known in France, Spain, and England; but thoſe metals had no circulation whatever in either Germany, Poland, Sweden, or Denmark. As ſpecie was then concentred among the nations inhabiting the coaſts and iſlands of the Mediterranean, that abundance prevented any great augmentation of its value.

That the riches of the ancient Pharaohs have been greatly exaggerated muſt appear from the following direct proof. Herodotus, in a ſpecification of the tributes levied by Darius, ſon of Hyſtaſpes, on the countries he had ſubdued, mentions the contribution of Aſſyria, including Babylon, as conſiſting of one thouſand talents, and five hundred emaſculated children annually for the uſe of the ſeraglio. But the whole of Egypt, Barca, Cirene, and another canton of Africa, had to pay altogether only ſeven hundred talents. That ſum indeed was excluſive of the ſupplies in grain for maintaining an hundred and twenty thouſand Perſians, and the produce of the fiſheries on the lake *Mœris*; but the laſt article was never equal to what the Greeks have childiſhly imagined. This ſum, however, was very trifling in compariſon of what Egypt muſt have paid, had the Pharaohs poſſeſſed ſuch enormous finances; for Darius certainly preſerved ſome proportion between the tribute and the revenues of the reſpective ſtates.

Thoſe who have written hitherto on Egypt, pretend, that it was greatly enriched by the ſpoils Seſoſtris had brought from his expedition, when he laid the whole habitable world under contribution. But this

this error originated from the interpreters, who, in ſhowing ſtrangers the temples and monuments of Egypt, impoſed on them with fables, which increaſed by repetition. Diodorus ſays, that Seſoſtris appeared in the ſtreets of his capital drawn by the deputies of the ſovereigns of the earth; and Lucan went ſtill farther, by making him harneſs the kings themſelves. In this manner fictions are ſpread abroad, and people are always found to exaggerate what others have dreamed.

The three firſt Ptolemies really occaſioned the opulence of Egypt by concentring the greateſt commerce then known on the ancient continent. As this wealth was founded on articles of the moſt deſtructive luxury, ſome able politicians at Rome invented an oracle of the Sibyls, forbidding the Romans to carry their arms into Egypt; and another equally ſpurious was ſaid to be delivered at Memphis *. But Auguſtus, who ridiculed prophecies, did not heſitate to invade Egypt whenever he found an opportunity; and ever ſince that celebrated epocha, the Romans continued to degenerate, as the politicians had foreſeen.

An Egyptian law, tranſmitted by Diodorus, has led many of the learned to believe that gold and

* *Haud equidem immeritò Cumanæ carmine vatis*
Cautum, ne Nili Peluſia tangeret arva
Heſperius miles.

Theſe verſes of the Pharſalia are a paraphraſe of the four following words ſaid to be extracted from the books of the Sibyls: *Miles Romane, Ægyptum cave.*

ſilver

ſilver money had long been uſed in that country; but nothing is more erroneous than this ſuppoſition; for thoſe metals continued to be weighed, as we find practiſed by thoſe who had to diſcharge their vows at the temples for the health of their children. The firſt current coin of Egypt was ſtruck by *Aryandes*, under the dominion of the Perſians, who, as Sperling juſtly obſerves, had never any great quantity of ſpecie in circulation *. It appears, indeed, that what had been iſſued was entirely drawn back by the annual tributes; for the Arabs, who ſearch among the ruins of Egypt, and even ſift much of the looſe ſand, have never diſcovered one ſingle piece. None of the medals found there are older than the reign of Alexander. They either belonged to the Ptolemies, or to the Egyptian towns which were allowed the privilege of having their own coin under the dominion of the Greeks: theſe were Peluſium, Memphis, Abydus, Thebes, Hermopolis, and the great city of Hercules †.

Among the different people, to whom the ancients and moderns have attributed the invention of money, the Egyptians were never mentioned, not even by Pollux, who enters into many details on that ſubject. Count Caylus was certainly deceived, when he believed that ſmall leaves of gold folded together were

* De Nummis non cuſis.—Sperling ſays, that in his time the falſe ſhekels were made in Holſtein. It is ſurpriſing that Ægyptian medals were not forged there likewiſe.

† Vaillant, Hiſt. Ptolem. ad Fidem Numiſmatum accommodata, 104.

uſed

uſed there as current coin *. The kind of bracelets, to which he alludes, are only found on the body, or in the mouth of ſome mummy; and, therefore, they ſhould be conſidered as amulets either phylacteric, or merely repreſenting the leaves of the perſea. The merchants of Egypt were prohibited by law from marking their ingots with a falſe quality, or weight; and every perſon could employ ſcales, as in the payments by ſhekels, when they were ſuſpected to be too light. It was with the Egyptians, as among the Hebrews, whoſe ſhekels were not coined until the building of the ſecond temple; and thoſe nations remained too cloſely connected for the one to have employed money while it was unknown to the other.

This at firſt ſeems to indicate a ſtriking reſemblance to the Chineſe; but by examining further we perceive it to be preciſely the contrary. The hiſtorians of China aſſert, that money was uſed there in very ancient times; and to ſupport this they have had recourſe to the fabrication of falſe medals. The opinion generally received is, that *Tching-tang*, who is ſaid to have mounted the throne one thouſand five hundred and fifty-eight years before our era, cauſed different metals to be caſt in molds to facilitate commerce in the different provinces of his dominions. But afterwards it became neceſſary to withdraw all the ſilver and gold pieces out of the hands of the Chineſe, becauſe they counterfeited them ſo exactly, that no perſon could poſſibly diſtinguiſh any difference. Yet the preſent method adopted in China is far from hav-

* Collection of Antiquities, vol. ii.

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ing entirely corrected that abuſe; becauſe they have ſubſtituted unjuſt weights and ſcales for falſe bullion. All the merchants there are as cunning in the art of weighing as the Jews and Egyptians; and the ſame roguery muſt always take place in every country deſtitute of current coin. The metal is aſſayed only by the touch-ſtone, which never indicates the quality with the niceſt preciſion, in the opinion of the moſt able judges, who certainly are the Jews. Such is the difference between the Egyptians and Chineſe; the firſt diſcovered a weakneſs of penetration in not inventing money, and the latter a want of probity by rendering the uſe of it impracticable. The gold and ſilver ſpecie, introduced into the commerce of Egypt by the Greeks, remained always unadulterated, and did not require to be withdrawn, as in China.

The pyramids, the obeliſks, the temples, and the exaggerations of Homer, made ſo many authors believe that the Pharaohs were immenſely rich. But the materials of all thoſe works had coſt them nothing, and their revenues were ſufficient to pay the workmen, who anciently in warm countries did not earn one tenth part of the wages now common in Europe. The rate of labor is always regulated by the expence required for the phyſical wants of the workman and thoſe of his family. We have already obſerved how little was neceſſary for nouriſhing a child in Egypt, when that country had no exterior commerce, which never fails to affect in ſome degree the price of proviſions; and the grain exported into Aſia by the caravans was not of conſequence

enough to be mentioned. The lands, poſſeſſed by the Pharaohs in their own right, probably ſufficed to pay for the food, and perhaps the clothing, of the laborers; and we may conclude that little other expence was neceſſary.

Statues of bronze, of gold, ſilver, and ivory, do not appear to have been in any meaſure ſo common in the edifices of Egypt as in thoſe of Greece and Italy; and it is not impoſſible, that the Athenians expended more money on the ſtatue of Minerva than Pharaoh *Amaſis* in hewing and tranſporting one of the obeliſks of *Sais*. When the ancients mention a prodigious circle of gold placed by the Egyptians around the tomb of *Oſymandias*, and a ſtatue of the ſame metal erected in the *Delta*, they confeſſed that they ſpoke of thoſe things from hearſay; but the difference is very great between ſeeing a huge maſs of gold and deſcribing it in a romance. The Egyptians were not even permitted to carry gold into the temple of Heliopolis; and the Jews would have acted wiſely by obſerving the ſame policy; but they continued to heap up treaſure in their temple at Jeruſalem to be conſtantly pillaged, as is ever the caſe where riches are placed in churches.

By the ceremony of the inauguration of the Pharaohs we perceive, that thoſe princes were far from diſplaying at their court the inſulting pomp of the eaſtern deſpots. Then ſurely was the time for the greateſt oſtentation, and yet the ſcholiaſt of Germanicus ſays, that the kings of Egypt, on that day, wore a very modeſt tunic, a collar, a ſceptre, and a diadem.

diadem. The latter, reſembling wreathed ſerpents, was probably made of gold; and the emperor Titus is ſuppoſed to have worn ſomething of the ſame kind at the conſecration of the bull *Apis*. He did not, however, carry the yoke of that animal, like the Pharaohs, becauſe it would have been the ſignal of revolt againſt his father, and yet his conduct on that occaſion ſeemed rather ſuſpicious *. As the kings of Egypt conformed themſelves ſcrupulouſly to the dietetic ſyſtem until *Pſammetichus*, their tables occaſioned little expence. They knew well that the firſt inhabitants of Egypt had not invented that regimen to gratify any principle of auſterity, but entirely from motives of health. The ſame thing was viſible in the manner of living adopted by the prieſts, whoſe very beds were woven with leaves of the palm-tree, in order to avoid a diſorder which would have rendered them impure; and not, as Perſius ſays, to lay themſelves under continual penitence. It was at Rome that thoſe beds of down, ſo much eſteemed in ancient times, were purchaſed from the Egyptians, who had always the good ſenſe not to employ them for their own uſe †.

* When Titus crowned himſelf at the conſecration of *Apis*, he was only a private perſon. *Quam ſuſpicionem*, ſays Suetonius, *auxit poſtquam Alexandriam petens, in conſecrando apud Memphim bove Api, diadema geſtavit: de more quidem rituque priſcæ religionis.* In Tito, vii.

† It is mentioned in an Epigram of Martial, beginning with theſe words: *Quid totus a Nilo*, &c. This commerce proceeded from the great quantity of geeſe fed by the Egyptians, as appears in the 2d Section.

We have already had occaſion, in a ſeparate Section on the liberal arts, to ſpeak of the ancient manner of dividing the people in Egypt. At preſent it ſhould be added, that the election of the twelve governors, who were to reign conjointly in that country after the death of Pharaoh *Sethon*, is the ſtrongeſt proof that the Egyptians were originally divided into twelve caſtes, of which it is ſcarcely to be doubted thoſe governors were chiefs, as we find among the tribes of the Jews. But beſides this diviſion, another more general was eſtabliſhed, according to which the people were conſidered as forming three great bodies. The ſame thing is obſervable with the Coptes, or modern Egyptians, whoſe Mebachers repreſent the *Calaſires* and the *Hermotybes*, or, what is the ſame thing, the military families. According to Herodotus, they once could have brought into the field four hundred and ten thouſand men; but an abſurdity of this nature does not require to be refuted.

At a time when money was very ſcarce, the Egyptians muſt have been obliged to aſſign lands to the ſoldiers; and afterwards, we may ſuppoſe, many diſputes took place relative to the produce, which, from the diverſity of ſoil, could not be alike on a given ſpace. To remedy this inconvenience, the legiſlature ordained that the military portions ſhould circulate continually, paſſing every year from one ſoldier to another, ſo that the perſon, who had at firſt a bad lot, received afterwards a better. By this operation, the property of lands was entirely taken away from the military order, who were reduced to the

the ſtate of mere uſufructuaries. Afterwards a law was made to prevent any ſoldier from cultivating the ground, following commerce, or exerciſing mechanical arts.

It is very aſtoniſhing indeed, that this diſpoſition of the Egyptian laws ſhould have been introduced in certain books written with the intention of juſtifying the ſyſtem of excluding nobility from commerce; for in fact the two caſes admit of no reſemblance whatever. The *Calaſires* and *Hermotybes* were obviouſly in the pay of the ſtate; and therefore the legiſlature properly prohibited them, as ſoldiers, from trading. No perſon was abſurd enough to propoſe that ſuch of our modern nobility, as ſerve in the army, ſhould apply themſelves to commerce. The idea was confined to thoſe, who, not being employed by the ſtate, could in no manner be compared to the *Calaſires* and *Hermotybes*, who were conſtantly on ſervice. When it is meant to decide political queſtions by the authority of ancient hiſtory, great care ſhould be taken to prove that the caſes in queſtion are exactly alike: otherwiſe nothing can reſult but a confuſion of ideas.

As the inhabitants of lower Egypt are, perhaps, born with greater ſtrength and vigor than thoſe of Thebais, it was ſo ordered, that the greater part of the military families were found in the *Delta*. The ſame arrangement has been ſuppoſed to have taken place in India, where the military families of the *Rayas* and *Nairs* inhabit likewiſe the moſt northern parts of the country.

The eſtabliſhments of the Egyptian militia comprehended chiefly the town of *Sais*, where Minerva, who was choſen by the ſoldiers for their guardian, had a famous temple. Thus we find the ſcarabee ſculptured on all the military rings; for that inſect was always conſidered as one of the principal ſymbols of the Egyptian Minerva. The ſame goddeſs in ſome monuments appeared like the Pallas of the Athenians, who likewiſe placed their warriors under the protection of that divinity, as the artiſans were under that of Vulcan.

With regard to the terms *Calaſires* and *Hermotybes*, by which the two corps of Egyptian militia were denoted *, they have hitherto never been ſatisfactorily interpreted. In my opinion, they were derived ſolely from the form of the clothing, and not from the armor, the moſt remarkable part of which was a huge buckler, like that uſed by the Gauls. In covering the whole body, it impeded every movement; and as the Egyptians formed themſelves into platoons to act ſeparately, the enemy preſſed them together ſo cloſely, that they became incapable of reſiſtance. Cæſar deſcribes a defenſive armor of ſome German people, which occaſioned their defeat nearly in the ſame manner. Large bucklers were generally rejected by the Romans, Greeks, Macedonians, and even

* The word *Calaſiris* ſignifies the garment generally worn in Egypt; and we find the term *Hemitybion* for another particular kind of tunic. The Latin tranſlator fancied that this word was originally Greek; but it has only been corrupted by a Greek termination, as well as *Hermotybies*.

by

by the Chineſe, who ſometimes, however, conceal themſelves under their ſhields, by forming a kind of a tortoiſe.

The bad principles, adopted by the Egyptians in tactics, proceeded in a great meaſure from their uſing chariots in war. If we except elephants, nothing is capable of producing more diſorder in attacks; and they have been tried and abandoned by almoſt every nation of the ancient continent. Beſides the confuſion occaſioned by theſe unwieldy machines, they prevent the advantage which might be derived from the horſes in a ſandy country, ſuch as the eaſtern and weſtern parts of the Delta, where the Egyptians encountered ſo many defeats.

It is generally believed that the Egyptians wore no helmet, and this error has originated from a ſtory related by Herodotus. He pretends to have obſerved near Peluſium, that the heads of the Perſians ſcattered on an ancient field of battle were much ſofter than thoſe of the Egyptians, who ſhaved their hair, and never, according to him, wore any head-dreſs. But they certainly had helmets of braſs, and cuiraſſes made of flax, like that of Pharaoh *Amaſis*, which created admiration in all thoſe who ſaw them at Samos, and at Lindus in the iſland of Rhodes, where the moſt beautiful was conſecrated to Minerva. This armor, deſcribed by Herodotus, was remarkable for its texture, where each thread was compoſed of three hundred and ſixty-five others, in alluſion to the indefinite year; for the Egyptians could never refrain from their allegories, even where they were altoge-

ther improper. Although Iphicrates introduced the Egyptian cuiraſſes among the Athenian militia, yet Pauſanias had reaſon in rejecting them as defective, becauſe, however effectual againſt ſwords, or ſtones thrown from ſlings, they could not reſiſt a pointed weapon. Beſides arms, colors, and inſtruments of muſic, the formidable *Calaſires* of Egypt, in all their expeditions, were provided with a number of birds of prey, and principally vultures, for the purpoſe of divination. Orus Apollo ſpeaks of this cuſtom in ſeveral parts of his Hieroglyphics; and it is exactly obſerved at this day by the *Nairs* and *Rayas* of India, who never give battle when the vultures appear ſullen and quiet. The generals moſt probably have a ſecret of giving them voracity, when it anſwers their purpoſe, by means of opium; and the Marrattoes render their horſes ſo impetuous by the uſe of that drug, that they are almoſt irreſiſtible. The Egyptians are ſaid to have had alſo a very numerous cavalry independent of their armed chariots, the figure of which is ſeen ſculptured on ſome of the monuments of Thebais. But by reflecting on the regular overflowing of the Nile, it is eaſy to conceive that the number of horſes could never have been very great among the Egyptians, becauſe they could only be employed when the river was within its bed. This inconvenience alone, without mentioning the canals and ditches encountered at every ſtep, muſt have diſguſted them with cavalry; and the force of their armies really conſiſted in infantry, as we are told by Xenophon.

What

What authors have written concerning Seſoſtris contains ſo many contradictions, that we muſt conclude they ſpoke at random. Some pretend that his whole life was ſpent in endeavouring to enervate the military ſpirit of the Egyptians, by encouraging effeminacy, becauſe he hoped by that means to prevent thoſe revolts ſo frequent and fatal among the militia of the Eaſt. Other hiſtorians, ſuch as Ariſtotle, aſſert that, on the contrary, he improved the art of war, and gave additional force to diſcipline. Soldiers in that country were accuſtomed to be governed by the point of honor, rather than through fear of puniſhment: they became infamous from diſobedience to their chiefs; and nothing but extraordinary proofs of bravery could retrieve their character. The Egyptian army, however, had little to boaſt of its expedition to Jeruſalem; for it was no difficult matter to ſeduce a pitiful race of men, who were vanquiſhed by the greateſt part of thoſe who choſe to attack them.

The *Calaſires* and *Hermotybes* have been accuſed of cowardice in actions, where in reality they were not preſent. According to our opinion, all the national militia retired into Ethiopia in the reign of Pſammetichus, and never fought more under the Pharaohs *. Thus they could not have aſſiſted at the ſiege of *Azot*; which, as Herodotus ſays, laſted twenty-nine years, and never ſince the world exiſted, continues

* Some authors make the number of ſoldiers who retired to Ethiopia amount to two hundred thouſand. But ſuppoſing only the half of that number, it follows that all the national militia emigrated.

he,

he, did any place hold out ſo long; for the foreign troops in the pay of the kings of Egypt refuſed to aſſault the town. It is difficult to ſay what the *Calaſires* and *Hermotybes* would have done on that occaſion; but they lived then peaceably in Ethiopia, and had no part in either the battle with Cambyſes, or any future operations. That prince, at the ſiege of Peluſium, is ſaid to have formed a line of ſacred animals before his troops; and by that means the Egyptians were prevented from throwing a ſingle dart. But that ſtratagem is a mere fable. In the firſt place, Peluſium did not require to be beſieged by Cambyſes, for it ſurrendered at his approach; and next, it ſhould be obſerved that the mercenary troops of Caria, Ionia, and Libya, who were then oppoſed to the Perſians, would have troubled themſelves very little about animals, not at all connected with their own religion. Thus we find the whole ſtory to be the invention of ſome writer ignorant of hiſtory, who believed that the ancient *Calaſires* and *Hermotybes* were ſtill in Egypt, when that country was ſubdued by the ſon of Cyrus.

In China, the left ſide has always been conſidered as the poſt of honor; but the right had the preference in Egypt. Pharaoh *Pſammetichus*, who violated at once all laws and uſages, formed the right wing of his army with the foreign troops, and aſſigned the left for the *Calaſires* and *Hermotybes*. Thoſe unfortunate people, conſidering themſelves diſhonored by the unjuſt preference given to famiſhed Greeks and faithleſs mercenaries, abandoned Egypt; although the inhabitants of that country were never accuſtomed

tomed to emigrate, as we learn from Clemens of Alexandria *.

Herodotus, ſpeaking of this retreat of the Egyptian ſoldiers, does not agree exactly with Diodorus, who attributes their diſcontent entirely to the affront they had received. The former pretends that they had been left during three years in the garriſon of Thebais by *Pſammetichus*, who would not allow them to leave thoſe quarters; but his account ſeems improbable, and he has beſides been notoriouſly deceived, when he places the eſtabliſhment they formed ſo far in the interior part of Ethiopia. It ſeems almoſt certain that they ſettled on the banks of the *Aſtaboras*, and opened a paſſage for the water of that river into the Red Sea. This artificial drain is not ſaid to have affected the water of the Nile, becauſe the diminution was, perhaps, too inconſiderable to be perceived.

The project of turning the Nile into the Red Sea, and of rendering Egypt uninhabitable, does not ſeem to have been unknown to the ancients. This is the opinion of Mr. Maas, that truly learned and eſtimable author, who has produced the beſt work now extant on the geography of Paleſtine. Claudian, who was born in Egypt, gives us ſome notion of the poſſibility of changing the courſe of the Nile; but nothing of the kind was attempted until the tenth century, and what is related on that occaſion appears to me as fabulous. Elmacin and Father Lallier aſſert that, under the kalifship of *Munſtanſir*, the water was completely turned away from Egypt by dikes and ſluices,

* Stromat. p. 354.

and

and the inhabitants began to fear a famine. As the patriarchs of Alexandria are the real metropolitans of Ethiopia, where they are repreſented by an *Abuna*, Michael the third was prevailed upon to carry preſents to the Ethiopians, and he ſucceeded in having the works deſtroyed.

It is not eaſy to conceive how the Ethiopians could have been at that time ſufficiently verſed in the arts to execute ſuch undertakings. Towards the year one thouſand five hundred and twenty-five, *Etana Denghel*, who was emperor of Ethiopia, ſent an ambaſſador to Liſbon, requeſting the king of Portugal to aſſiſt him with a number of European pioneers and architects, for the purpoſe of preventing any water from deſcending into Egypt. This monarch pretended that one of his predeceſſors, called *Lalibala* by Ludolph, had endeavoured to execute the ſame project by opening a canal oppoſite Suakem. That place is about an hundred miles diſtant from the Nile, according to the Portugueſe, who were incapable of accompliſhing the intended object; and we know that they did not even make a beginning. In the year one thouſand ſeven hundred and ſix, *Teklimanout*, calling himſelf king of Abyſſinia, threatened the pacha of Cairo with deſtroying Egypt by drying up the Nile *. But it was eaſier for an Abyſſinian to ſpeak in this manner to a Turk, than to execute any project of that nature.

It is not at Suakem, as the Portugueſe believed, but more to the ſouth, in the eighteenth degree, that the ſurface of the country begins to form a continual

* Continuation of Lobo's Voyage.

deſcent

deſcent to the very ſhore of the Red Sea. At that place the water of the *Aſtaboras*, or *Tacaze*, might be prevented from falling into the Nile, and even that river itſelf directed towards the eaſt, inſtead of flowing northwards, as at preſent. This, however, would require prodigious labor, and the profit ariſing from it would never compenſate for the expence. Beſides, the Ethiopians would gain nothing by ruining Egypt; and if their object was only to have a communication with the Arabian gulph, it might be effected by repairing the canal formerly opened by the Egyptian deſerters. That cut muſt now be entirely dry, becauſe it is not marked down by Niebuhr, and the poſition on d'Anville's map is altogether ideal.

Ethiopia and Egypt ſeldom formed one dominion; but if theſe two countries were ſubject to one prince, he might ſucceed by means of dikes and ſluices to raiſe the Nile annually to the exact height neceſſary for inundating the whole country from Syene to the Mediterranean. By collecting the rain-water ſwallowed up in the ſands of Abyſſinia, reſervoirs might be formed for ſupplying Egypt at will. Something of the kind is, indeed, ſaid to have been attempted by the ancients; becauſe far in the interior of Africa ſome rivers are found communicating with each other by canals formed ſeparately by human art; but no perſon can ſuppoſe that any ſuch project was ever formed by the Egyptians, who, perhaps, never conceived it to be practicable. The prieſts knew nearly every thing to be acquired concerning the

the cauſes of the overflowing of the Nile, which they explained in a very ſatisfactory manner to Eudoxus *. But, with regard to the ſource of that river, they either placed it too far towards the ſouth, or ſuppoſed that, properly ſpeaking, no ſuch ſpot exiſted. This opinion, indeed, ſeems moſt probable; for in all appearance a number of ſmall brooks are formed in different parts ſome days after the rain begins to fall in the torrid zone. The ſource of the river may, therefore, be found ſometimes in one valley, and ſometimes in another, accordingly as the wind drives the clouds, or as they are attracted to ſome particular mountain. Thus the Nile probably originates at certain periods in very diſtant provinces; but it cannot poſſibly proceed from the heights of the auſtral hemiſphere, as the prieſts ſeem to have ſuppoſed.

What has been ſaid may ſuffice to give a tolerable idea of the internal government of ancient Egypt; but long diſcuſſions would be neceſſary to indicate the policy obſerved towards other nations. This conduct ſeems to have been little underſtood by the Egyptians in general, and we may cite as an example the unpardonable fault of *Amaſis*, who neglected to form a ſecret treaty with the Arabs, when the power of Cyrus began to make Aſia tremble. The ancients themſelves have obſerved, that, if the Egyptians had adopted this precaution, the army of Cambyſes would never have penetrated even as far as the iſthmus of Suez. Pſammetichus was guilty of a

* Plutarch in Placitis Philoſoph. lib. iv.

ſtill

ſtill more enormous imprudence in committing the defence of Egypt to foreign troops, and eſtabliſhing colonies there compoſed of the dregs of different nations. The coaſt of the Mediterranean might have remained free to the commerce of Greece; but the Greeks themſelves ſhould never have been admitted as ſettlers in the cantons of the *Delta*. The Egyptians had already in their country too many foreign coloniſts, who were allowed to live in bodies according to their particular laws; and this is contrary to all rules of policy. One of theſe ſocieties, compoſed ſolely of Phenicians, poſſeſſed a conſiderable part of Memphis; a band of Arabs were ſedentary at Coptus; and the inroads of the Bedouins could not always be prevented, as we find by the contract eſtabliſhed between them and the Egyptians, as well as by the great uſeleſs wall conſtructed by Seſoſtris. The Arabs of Coptus carried on a kind of traffic, and ſent ſome wares as far as the town called *Arabia Felix*, which certainly was not a country, as the author of the Periplus of the Erythrean Sea has aſſerted in a very poſitive manner. Thus, when the Ptolemies opened a direct intercourſe with India, Arabia Felix diſappeared, and the place, where it formerly ſtood, was levelled entirely by the Romans. The Ethiopians had an eſtabliſhment in higher Egypt; and the weſtern Africans, who, in my opinion, compoſed the *deteſted tribe*, lived in hordes towards the *Racotis*, and on the ſpot where Alexandria was afterwards founded. The Jews were fixed in the neighbourhood of the little city of Hercules, which

we

we take to be *Avaris*; but ſome of the learned look for this town in Arabia Petrea, towards a place where many Egyptian monuments have been diſcovered *. We do not include the Babylonian ſettlement below Memphis, becauſe it was not formed apparently until after the invaſion of Cambyſes; and thoſe, who were taken for Babylonians, ſeem rather to have been Perſians, who had in that place the only Pyrea ever ſeen in Egypt. The ancients have beſides mentioned a troop of fugitive Trojans, whom the Egyptians received likewiſe, and placed them near the great quarries to the eaſtward of the Nile; but the ſtory of theſe pretended Trojans ſeems fabulous, and ſome other race of men were meant, whoſe hiſtory is too obſcure to admit of elucidation.

Beſides theſe ſtrangers already mentioned, ſome Carians and Ionians were found in Egypt, who at firſt poſſeſſed ſome lands near the Peluſian branch of the Nile, abandoned moſt probably by the *Calaſires* and *Hermotybes*. They were afterwards introduced to garriſon the capital, where they remained conſtantly, until diſperſed by Cambyſes. The Pharaohs

* They pretend that *Avaris* is the ſame town as Ptolemais. Stephanus, and the Catalogue of Biſhoprics, place it in Arabia, with the name of *Avara*, which is called *Avatha*, in the *Notice of the Empire*, printed at Baſil in 1552, where the text is more correct than in any other. That opinion, however, is founded merely on the reſemblance of the name; and a thouſand examples prove that Joſephus committed enormous faults relative to the geography of Egypt. In my idea he has confounded the Bubaſtic canal with the Tanitic mouth of the Nile; and this confuſion has prevented *Avaris* from being found in *Sethron*.

had

had employed that body of militia in many expeditions; and it may be ſuppoſed they alſo took into pay the Phenicians who inhabited Memphis, when they undertook to form a navy. Nothing of the kind, however, was attempted previous to the reign of Pſammetichus, who, according to ſome chronologiſts, did not aſcend the throne until the year ſix hundred and ſeventy-three before our preſent era.

SECT. X.

ON THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHINESE.

AS the Scythians were at all times reſtleſs and enemies to peace, the firſt chiefs, choſen by the old men to conduct the hordes, led them eaſily from one military expedition to another. Conſtantly at war, they had continual occaſion for caciques or captains, who afterwards became independent, and tranſmitted the ſovereignty to their children, or appointed ſucceſſors, without conſulting the people. This is the reaſon why the Chineſe were never ſeen proceeding in a body to elect an emperor, even when the imperial family in the male line became extinct; and to the ſame cauſe ſhould be attributed the want of power in the legiſlature of China to regulate the order of ſucceſſion in the reigning dynaſty. Yet a more eſſential ſtep could not have been taken to ſtop the firſt progreſs of that deſpotiſm, which continued to augment until the reign of *Schi-chuan-di*.

That prince diſſipated the very ſhadow of the ancient feudal government, by uniting all the provinces under his immediate authority. Previous to this event, China was divided into a great number of petty ſtates, ſome of which had very wiſe regulations; and many of their laws were afterwards new-modelled, and incorporated in the general conſtitution of the empire. Among the independent ſovereigns, ſome were found truly reſpectable, who loved and practiſed virtue:

virtue: they thought no people more worthy of their protection than men of learning, who, finding it there impoſſible to diſtinguiſh themſelves in real ſcience, endeavoured to ſhine in works of morality, which depended leſs on acquired knowledge. Confucius in this manner obtained great reputation in the little kingdom of *Lon*, where he became prime miniſter. If born again at the preſent day, he would not perhaps be able to attain the rank of a mandarin of the ninth claſs; for the elevation of a man becomes more the effect of chance in proportion as deſpotiſm increaſes. If China had not been divided into ſo many different ſtates, it would never have become what it now is. The emperors, who ſucceeded *Schi-chuan-di*, entruſted the firſt dignities and the government of the provinces almoſt entirely to eunuchs, incapable of conceiving or executing any great project. They muſt probably have ſtill continued in thoſe employments, had not the Tartars expelled them, after having taken advantage of their treaſon to invade the empire: every thing was in ſuch diſorder, that formidable bands of robbers pillaged the provinces; and Pe-kin could not reſiſt their attacks, although defended by a garriſon of ſixty thouſand men. Yet the Moguls found the diſtreſs of that country ſtill greater in the thirteenth century, when *Koublai Kan* employed the greateſt zeal to reſtore tranquillity and good order. He not only repaired the towns which the Chineſe had ſo ill defended againſt the generals of *Gengis Kan*, but he likewiſe built many others, beſides Pe-kin, where he fixed the ſeat of empire, from political motives ſuffi-

ciently juſtified by events. That prince, indeed, had a Chineſe preceptor from his earlieſt years; but, having attained manhood, he ſaw clearly that, without the aid of foreign artiſts and ſcientific men, it was impoſſible to execute any uſeful project; and the Mandhuis made exactly the ſame obſervations.

China is more governed by police than by laws; and, unleſs an abſolute authority were veſted in the deputies of the ſovereign, ſo vaſt a country could never be held under the ſubjection of one perſon. Yet, by means of abſolute authority, the Tartars, who could ſcarcely read or write when they conquered China, have governed better there than the Chineſe themſelves, who had only their own country to regulate, while the Mandhuis have, beſides, to maintain their ſway in the two Tartaries.

The two chief ſprings of this government are the whip and the cudgel; and neither Chineſe nor Tartar can be ſecure againſt this diſcipline. *The emperor*, ſays Father du Halde, *ſometimes orders a few baſtinadoes to perſons of great rank and conſequence, and afterwards treats them as if nothing had happened* *. This is the conduct of all the deſpots of Aſia without exception: their ſubjects may be ill uſed in a thouſand different ways; but ſuch ſlaves can never be diſhonored, becauſe that is contrary to the nature of things.

Whenever a general makes his appearance, all the ſoldiers fall on their knees, either in the camp or on the parade; and men of that diſpoſition can never be

* Deſcription of China, vol. ii.

robbed

robbed of their honor. Yet the Chineſe imagine, that their form of government was modelled on paternal authority; but they could never have harboured this idea, if their moraliſts had been able to determine how far paternal authority ſhould extend. Thoſe, who were accuſtomed to deſpotiſm in each family, could not be ſurpriſed to find it in the ſtate; and the princes took advantage of this diſpoſition to introduce a ſervile ſubmiſſion, very different from political ſubordination. Thus the ſecret of government conſiſts chiefly in promoting a falſe morality, and refraining from whatever might tend to limit the power of fathers over their children. In Perſia and Turkey, no parent can ſell his ſon, becauſe ſuch bargains are declared illegal; and if recourſe were had there to the Juſtinian code, which is faithfully tranſlated into Arabic, to ſanction this abuſe, the cadis would then judge according to the canonical law; for they only employ the Roman procedure in caſes where the texts and gloſſaries of the Koran are indeciſive. In China, on the contrary, the validity of ſuch contracts has never been diſputed, becauſe they are known to be legal; and the magiſtrates would exert the executive power to ſeize a child, who had taken refuge with his uncle, after being ſold by his father.

Thoſe people muſt be very ill informed, who maintain in Europe, that the political conſtitution of China is not deſpotic. They tell us in vain of judiciary tribunals being eſtabliſhed there; for that is likewiſe the caſe in all the abſolute ſtates of Aſia. It can never be ſuppoſed that one man could decide all the conteſts

ariſing in a country as extenſive as the whole of Europe.

The governors of the ſmalleſt places have the right of *pent-ſe;* that is to ſay, they can beat all the citizens with impunity. All the *tſong-tou*, or viceroys, poſſeſs the power of life and death, without requiring to have decrees ſigned by the emperor, or inſpected by any ſuperior tribunal; and they frequently order immediate execution, without the ſmalleſt formality of juſtice. Their inſtructions point out a number of ſituations when immediate death may be inflicted on criminals *; and it is preciſely from having ſpecified certain caſes that none are excepted. The *tſong-tou* can eaſily convict the dead of conſpiracy, revolt, and treaſon, which admits of ſo much variety in China. The judges do not conduct their criminal proceedings according to the manner adopted in the moſt poliſhed countries of Europe; otherwiſe, the acts of procedure would be ſent to Pe-kin. But they ſend nothing more than the ſentence, contained in three or four lines, like that of the miſſionaries who were ſtrangled in the province of *Nan-kin*.

Under the Chineſe government the emperors ſcarcely ever quitted their palace: when they did go out, a kind of *courrouc* was made, as in Perſia, and any perſon who looked at them when paſſing incurred death. All the deſpots of the Eaſt ſhut themſelves up in the ſame manner; and it would be impoſſible to deſcribe the evils produced by this fatal cuſtom in ſo

* "The emperor empowers the *tſong-tou*, and even the viceroy, to inflict inſtant death on criminals." Deſcript. of China.

many

many parts of Aſia. The Chineſe were the only people who endeavoured to find a remedy by ſending viſitors into the provinces to examine the conduct of the viceroys and *tſong-tou*. But, when thoſe governors were eunuchs, it was neceſſary to wink at their exactions, becauſe the emperor inherited their fortunes. This infamous cuſtom diſguſted the Tartars; and, diſdaining to be the heirs of mutilated wretches, at the expence of the people, they appointed men to govern the provinces.

The emperors of the preceding dynaſty had confiſcated many landed poſſeſſions; and when united to their domain, they were left uncultivated. Thoſe eſtates became ſo very extenſive, that the Tartars did not deprive the Chineſe of a ſingle foot of land at the conqueſt; for they found a ſufficiency to make a decent eſtabliſhment for each of their ſoldiers in the different appendages. Their troops, ranged under eight banners, amounted altogether to about ſeventy-five or eighty thouſand men, excluſive of women, children, and Mandhuis, who came from Tartary, when the conqueſt was effected, and received lands like the reſt.

The name of tribunal is very improperly given, in ſome relations, to certain offices at Pe-kin, eſtabliſhed for the ſuperintending of the particular affairs of the prince. The pretended tribunal of buildings is merely for the inſpection of the furniture of the palace, the manufactures poſſeſſed immediately by the emperor, and whatever works he may be deſirous of having conſtructed. Such inſtitutions are found in

all the abſolute ſtates of Aſia, and they are called deſters, or chambers, at Conſtantinople and Iſpahan.

The tribunal of mathematics never had that name, except in the relations of the Jeſuits. It was a college under the Chineſe government, appointed not only to compoſe almanacs, but to determine, according to certain principles of judicial aſtrology, the days when the ſovereign could devote himſelf to different affairs. The preciſe time was alſo ſuperſtitiouſly fixed for the ceremony of his ploughing, according to the inſtitution of *Ven-ti*. Thus we ſee nearly the ſame etiquette obſerved at the court of China as in Perſia, where the penſioned aſtrologers regulated the actions of the emperor, with this difference, that the time for him to eat with the laborers, clothed like a peaſant, was determined by the magi, and not by the aſtrologers.

The ancient Chineſe gave the name of the ſky, the earth, and the four ſeaſons, to the ſix great colleges of the court. To that called autumn all criminal affairs are now addreſſed; and, therefore, it ſhould be conſidered as a real tribunal, very different from the offices of ſuperintendency.

Nothing in the whole juriſprudence of the Chineſe is more ſhocking, than the cuſtom borrowed from the Scythians, of puniſhing the relations of a criminal to the ninth degree, although their innocence was notorious. The huſband, in the firſt place, is reſponſible for the actions of his wife and children. At the death of the father, the eldeſt ſon muſt anſwer for the conduct of his younger brothers: and they are all alike dragged to puniſhment, and involved in the ſame diſ-

grace,

grace, while their ſiſters are reduced to ſlavery without mercy.

On my firſt arrival at Pe-kin, ſays Father Amiot, that rigor appeared to me extreme; but when I obſerved afterwards, continues he, that the Chineſe cannot be induced to act unleſs from fear or intereſt, I began to conſider this ſeverity as reaſonable and neceſſary *. But the difference is very great between ſpeaking according to the principles of a deſpotic government, and thoſe of equity and natural right, concerning which Father Amiot was very indifferent; becauſe he belonged to a ſociety where obedience had too much degenerated into a blind ſubmiſſion.

Innocence ſhould in no caſe be puniſhed from any motive whatever; and to allege neceſſity, inſtead of juſtice, is renewing an ancient maxim of tyranny, which has made mankind ſhudder in all the ſtates of Europe. What is neceſſary for the deſpot may not be ſo for the people. That ſervile fear, which directs the actions of the Chineſe, is a conſequence of their inſtitutions; and who indeed could refrain from trembling in a country where innocence itſelf is not in ſafety?

The emperor *Ven-ti* propoſed to abrogate the law which puniſhes a whole family for the particular fault of one of its members. On this he was told, If you wiſh to reign over men, annul this inſtitution; but it is neceſſary to keep your ſubjects in ſlavery:—and this fatal maxim, conſequently, has been preſerved unimpaired till the preſent moment.

* Chineſe Art of War.

Ancient

Ancient philoſophers pretended, that, according to rigid right, the deſcendants of a criminal, juſtly puniſhed, ſhould not be involved in his diſgrace. Plato admits only one caſe as an exception to the general rule. When the great grandfather, the grandfather, and the father of a man, ſays he, have ſuffered death, after being ſucceſſively convicted of a great crime; that perſon, he adds, ſhould be conſidered as infamous, and incapable of exerciſing any employ in the republic; becauſe the race was evidently perverſe, when it could not be corrected by three ſucceſſive puniſhments and the lapſe of four generations. We might be led to ſpeak more ſeriouſly of this caſe imagined by Plato, were it not ſo extraordinary, that, perhaps, no example of the kind has ever occurred ſince the origin of political ſocieties.

If it was an injuſtice, according to the opinion of philoſophers, to mark thoſe with infamy who were not culpable, we may conceive the barbarity or atrocity of putting them to death. When a whole Chineſe family became extinct under the hands of the executioner, the emperor confiſcated their poſſeſſions; and the perſons of the females related to the real or ſuppoſed criminals were ſold for his particular profit. Nearly the ſame cuſtom was obſerved among the Scythians mentioned by Herodotus; but all my reſearches have not been able to aſcertain, whether or not it had likewiſe been adopted by the independent ſovereigns of China, who ſucceeded the petty kans. The continual wars of the latter prevented them from improving the laws, and regulating the ſtate, like the

independent ſovereigns; and Confucius, if all we have heard concerning him be true, would not, in all probability, have allowed a whole family of the kingdom of *Lon* to be condemned for the fault of an individual.

No nation of Aſia ever exerciſed a torture comparable to that of the Chineſe, who tear the ſkin and fleſh in ſtripes from the body of the accuſed, until he confeſſes a crime of which, perhaps, he is innocent. As different kinds of mutilations were formerly practiſed in China, ſome judges repreſented to the emperor *Ven-ti*, that thoſe who had their legs amputated below the inflexion of the knee frequently periſhed in the operation, and even the ſurvivors ſuffered more than death. That prince, who merited praiſe, had he not been ſilly enough to ſwallow the drink of immortality, aboliſhed all kinds of diſfigurements by an edict, which remained in force, like the greater part iſſued there, during the life of the framer. Afterwards, it became cuſtomary to imprint black characters on the face, as well as to cut off the noſe; and to this the Chineſe owe their expertneſs in making artificial noſes, and applying them ſo as to create a perfect deception. Such ſtigmas are eaſily effaced entirely, although inflicted with a burning iron, or by pricking the epiderm. It is not from being in pain about their honor, that the thieves are anxious to make theſe marks diſappear; but becauſe they render the practice of their villany more difficult. In other places, ſays Father Trigault, garriſons are placed in towns to defend them againſt foreign enemies; in China, they

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are intended to protect the towns from robbers. All travellers, however, confeſs that the danger is ſtill greater by day than during the night. The Tartars endeavour as much as poſſible to obſerve a ſevere diſcipline; and a ſingle Mandhui conducts a thouſand Chineſe with a whip, in the ſame manner that a janiſſary governs as many Greeks with a cudgel.

Mr. Porter, who has beſtowed ſo much praiſe on the police of the Turks *, ſhould have perceived that the ſame apparent order is obvious in all the cities of deſpotic ſtates; and it diminiſhes in proportion to the diſtance from the towns. Little ſecurity can be found in the country, unleſs immediately under the protection of ſome of the members of the police; who, in arbitrary ſtates, are always ſoldiers; becauſe the prince has no other ſupport.

Mr. Salmon aſſures us, that, according to the documents employed by him in compoſing his Hiſtory, not leſs than fifteen thouſand perſons are almoſt conſtantly confined in the priſons of Canton †. But the criminals ſhould be diſtinguiſhed in this calculation from thoſe who are ſhut up only for a few days.

When the emperor *Schi-chuan-di* united all the provinces under his immediate control, he forbade the uſe of arms among the Chineſe, and would not even allow them to poſſeſs an arrow or a dart. This maxim encouraged the attempts of robbers, who were ſure of finding the inhabitants of the country altogether defenceleſs. It occaſioned alſo many other regulations

* Obſervations on the Religion and Laws of the Turks.

† Preſent State of China, vol. i.

relative

relative to caſes where blood was ſhed; becauſe, from ſuch appearances, the legiſlator inferred the uſe of ſome offenſive weapon. When the Chineſe fight among themſelves, each avoids carefully either tearing the clothes or piercing the ſkin of his antagoniſt. The murderer is puniſhed with death; but he has always to languiſh a conſiderable time in priſon: for, except thoſe caſes where the *tſong-tou* and viceroys find it convenient to act irregularly, all ſentences of death muſt be ſigned by the emperor. Some conſider this formality as peculiar to China; but it is practiſed in all the deſpotic ſtates of Aſia, and principally in Perſia, as we learn from Chardin *. This cuſtom is connected with the conſtitution of an abſolute government, where the laws have no power without the will of the prince, who, beſides, conſiders his ſubjects as a property; and it is contrary to the eſſence of ſervitude, that a maſter ſhould be deprived of a ſlave without his conſent.

Religious rites have had a very great influence, as we may well ſuppoſe, on the civil law of the Chineſe. The ſacrifices offered to the manes of their deceaſed anceſtors do not permit that a father ſhould leave his whole poſſeſſions to an only daughter: it is an axiom, that a woman cannot ſacrifice; and, therefore, the teſtator muſt provide ſome other perſon to perform the ceremony. Female children can never inherit any

* "In Perſia, the king alone can give ſentence of death; and when the *divan-bequi* at the court, or the magiſtrates of the provinces, find a man meriting death, information is given to the king, who decides the fate of the criminal." Deſcription of the Perſian Government, chap. xvii.

thing

thing when they have brothers; for the law divides all property equally among the males, charging them with nothing more than the maintenance of their ſiſters until they marry; and then no dowry is ever paid. Women are particularly ill treated in China by the legiſlator, who has taken leſs pains to provide for their ſubſiſtence than to inſure their ſlavery.

Different kinds of ſervitude are ſeen among the Chineſe, excluſive of what reſults from polygamy. As the Tartars were the immediate ſlaves of their kan, previous to the conqueſt of China, they continue exactly in the ſame ſtate at preſent. This does not proceed, as might be imagined, from any obligations impoſed upon them by the idea of their holding lands through the liberality of the prince. They can ſell ſuch poſſeſſions to one another, and no longer retain any right to the alienated lands, unleſs the transfer has been made to the Chineſe, who are obliged, on receiving back the purchaſe-money, to make reſtitution of the landed property, which would otherwiſe be gradually withdrawn entirely from the conquerors. The conduct of the Tartars in China is altogether extraordinary: they have effected, through prudence, what the greateſt politicians would ſcarcely have dared to attempt by artifice and cunning. When Alexander forced the Macedonians to aſſume the garb of the Perſians, he proceeded ignorantly, but not ſo abſurdly as the Moguls, who preſerved their own dreſs, and allowed that of the conquered to remain alſo. Thus one Tartar was known among a thouſand Chineſe. The Mandhuis alone acted properly.

Some

Some are ſlaves in China from their birth; while others, who were originally free, have been ſold either with their own conſent, or by force; and their deſcendants remain in bondage. Liberty is ſo lightly treated, that a man can ſell himſelf there at the preſent day. The Chineſe are ignorant of that ſpecies of ſlavery known in Greece and Egypt, where one whole nation is condemned to ſerve another; and which may be called Helotiſm. Yet this fate might have attended the Moguls, had they been ſubjugated inſtead of being expelled; but, from cauſes difficult to be explained, they are again very powerful in China, and they increaſe daily, as well as the Mahometans. The latter have among them a ſpecies of ſlavery leſs ſhocking to natural right than all others: they rear ſome of the children expoſed on dunghills by the Chineſe, and ſubject them, when grown up, to a very eaſy yoke.

Confiſcation occaſions numberleſs evils in China. It is however little known among the peaſants, who are as remarkable for their virtues, as the populace of the towns are for their vices. They cannot be reproached either with bad faith, roguery, infanticide, or debauchery; for nothing equals their diſcretion, ſobriety, and laborioufneſs. But they are cruſhed by continual ſtatute-work, which is exacted with great rigor in China, as well as throughout the whole of Aſia.

An edict of the emperor *Suen-ti* exempts for ſome time from public works thoſe who have loſt their father or mother; for theſe unfortunate people, ſays he,

he, ſhould be allowed to reimburſe themſelves for the expences of this burial. This was indeed a trifling remedy for a very great evil. As the greater part of the Chineſe peaſants have neither oxen nor horſes, they cultivate with their hands alone the portions of land they rent from the great proprietors *. To labor for the ſovereign is ruinous to thoſe people for two reaſons: they loſe, as the emperor *Suen-ti* obſerves, a great deal of precious time, and their ſtrength is exhauſted by being forced to ſupply the place of cattle. I obſerved, ſays Nieuhof, when paſſing from Canton to Pe-kin, that the Chineſe peaſants were frequently forced by ſtripes to draw the veſſel which conveyed the Dutch ambaſſador, although he begged the conductors to ſhow more moderation. This is the ſituation of thoſe people, who form the moſt reſpectable part of the empire; and it is a melancholy circumſtance that their habitations, when far diſtant from towns, cannot be protected againſt thieves and vagabonds.

On advancing towards the centre of the provinces, fewer appearances of labor are ſeen, and the villages diminiſh in number. Thus, not nearly one-half of the ſoil in the whole empire is cultivated; particularly if we include the prodigious cantons of thoſe ſavages called *Mia-oſſé*. Yet agriculture cannot be conſidered as brought to great perfection in any country, until the arable are in proportion to all the barren lands as fifty to three; and we are told that this has been effected in England.

* Eckerberg. Bericht von der Chineſiſhen Landwirthſchaft.

All

All the provinces of China muſt not be judged by thoſe of *Che-kan* and *Nan-kin*, the ſoil of which is conſidered as formerly belonging to the ſea, or an inundation of the Yellow River. The chief mouth of that river is ſaid to have been anciently in the gulph of *Pe-tcheli*, five degrees more towards the north than at this day. Father Gaubil, in his Hiſtory of the Moguls, ſpeaks very fully of this change, without being willing to admit that the emperor *Yu* could never have conducted the Yellow River like a brook, and that too at a period two thouſand two hundred years before our era. But, in fact, the whole account given in the *Chou-King* is groſsly fabulous. When we conſider the map, it would ſeem indeed that the extreme irregularity in the courſe of that river had proceeded from dikes conſtructed for the purpoſe. If the Chineſe do not take more efficacious meaſures than they have hitherto adopted, the Yellow River muſt again occaſion many embarraſſments, for its windings are too conſiderable; and, if it really fell originally into the gulph of *Pe-tcheli*, it may well be expected to reſume that direction.

As the Chineſe have a ſtrong propenſity, or rather an ardent paſſion, for commerce, the emperor *Ven-ti* endeavoured to give ſome conſequence to the profeſſion of huſbandmen, that they might be preſerved from that ſpirit of traffic and roguery, which, like a growing contagion, infected the nation ever ſince the government became deſpotic under *Schi-chuan-di*. But the ceremony of the emperor tilling the earth, as many

monarchs of India had done before, could not compenſate for arbitrary impoſition and continual ſtatute-labors. Let agriculture be freed from the ſhackles of tyranny; and then, inſtead of requiring recompences or honors, its own force will be ſufficient to enſure an ample reward.

What has moſt contributed to retain the Chineſe peaſants in the country, is the conſciouſneſs that their vexations are not equal to thoſe of the merchants: but the latter always ſteer againſt the ſtream, inſtead of being diſcouraged by obſtacles. They reſemble the Jews, who inhabit the different ſtates of Aſia: their continual grievances goad them on; and they purſue traffic, becauſe it enables them to purchaſe protection at court. The great injuſtice they experience is in ſome meaſure repaired by the opportunities they are allowed of making illicit gain; and, to explain this, we ſhall quote a paſſage of the Journal of Mr. de Lange, agent at Pe-kin for the court of Peterſbourg. *The gentry in China*, ſays he, *defraud the merchants, and take away their wares under every kind of pretext, without their ever being able to obtain payment. On that account, the traders and others who exerciſe lucrative profeſſions at Pe-kin, are accuſtomed to chuſe protectors among the princes of the blood and other great lords or miniſters of the court, to whom they pay annually a certain proportion of their gain. By this expedient they are inſured againſt the extortions of mandarins, and even of private ſoldiers. Without powerful protection a merchant is a ruined man in China, and particularly at Pe-kin, where*

where every perſon thinks he has an inconteſtable right to form pretenſions on thoſe who live by traffic. If any man is raſh enough to require an equitable reparation by the way of public juſtice, he falls from bad to worſe. The mandarins, after having drawn from him as much money as poſſible, do not fail indeed to order the effects taken unjuſtly to be brought to the college; but he muſt be ſtill more knowing to have them taken thence.

From the combination of theſe cauſes, and many others, it reſults, that the number of merchants even moderately rich is not very great, conſidering the quantity of ſhops and the multitude of pedlars who crowd together in the principal towns of the empire, or frequent the fairs. The exterior commerce is not ſuppoſed to amount to more annually than five million ounces of ſilver; and the ounce of that metal at Pe-kin is now equal to about ſix ſhillings and three-pence.

Several writers have ſpoken of the revenues of the emperor of China, but in a manner ſo very vague, that nothing ſatisfactory can be deduced from it. Mr. Salmon does not believe that the whole imperial income amounts to more annually than twenty-two millions of pounds ſterling. The real receipt in ſilver moſt probably does not exceed two-thirds of that ſum; for we do not ſpeak here of what is paid in kind, although it may admit of being eſtimated with ſome exactneſs: but no perſon can calculate the value of confiſcations, which are of infinite importance to avaricious princes.

It ſhould be obſerved, that, in all deſpotic ſtates, the revenues of the ſovereigns are much leſs than we are tempted to believe, conſidering the great extent of their dominions. The ſultan did not receive annually four millions of pounds ſterling from all the countries in Europe, Aſia, and Africa, which were under his ſway before the laſt war. The revenues of the great Mogul have been greatly exaggerated; for they do not in reality exceed one hundred and eighty-five millions of *ſicca*, or ſomewhat leſs than twenty-three millions ſterling.

Under the Chineſe government the eunuchs had introduced ſo much diſorder into the finances of the empire, that it has hitherto been impoſſible to clear up the chaos. The Tartars found the greater part of the provinces indebted ſo largely to the treaſury, that the debt could never be paid, and it was no longer required. The eunuchs dreamed of nothing but impoſts, until they wanted means to levy them; and, when the people complained of a tax on ſalt, it was commuted for another on iron. Some of their dreadful depredations are detailed by a Chineſe author, called *Chi-kiai*, whoſe expreſſions we have preſerved on account of their energy.

"Under the preſent dynaſty," ſays he, "we hear "of nothing but impoſts, duties, and prohibitions. "This is exceſſive. They are levied on the moun- "tains, and on the vallies; on the rivers, and on the "ſeas; on ſalt and on iron; on wine and on tea; on "linens and on ſilks; on paſſages and on markets;

"on

" on brooks and on bridges: on all theſe, and on " many other things, I ſee every-where the prohibi- " tory mark *."

The emperor did not receive the thouſandth part of theſe exactions, which were farmed out by the eunuchs to men who gave them the greater part of the profits. To palliate the deficiency of the receipt, they declared the provinces indebted for great ſums, although they proceeded from impoſitions added to the ordinary tribute. This artifice appeared execrable to the Tartars, who had not yet, ſays Father Amiot, loſt their natural probity; and they reformed the ſalt-works and cuſtom-houſes, except that of Canton, which, in Aſia, is as odious as thoſe of Spain and Portugal are in Europe.

Beſides all theſe, another exceſſive abuſe exiſted until it was remedied by the emperor *Can-hi*. In republics and moderate governments, thoſe who rent lands in order to profit by them, might be charged with the taxes; but, in deſpotic ſtates, they muſt be required from the proprietors, otherwiſe the tenants are liable to be haraſſed both by the landlord and the ſovereign. This was exactly the caſe in China at the arrival of the Tartars, who ordered that, in future, none but the real owners of eſtates ſhould be reſponſible for the taxes.

The greater part of the revenues of the emperor of China conſiſt in rice, wheat, raw and wrought ſilk, hay, ſtraw, tobacco, tea, and brandy. They are,

* Collection of Imperial Edicts and Remonſtrances, &c. tranſlated from the Chineſe by Father Hervieu.

therefore, under the neceſſity of paying their officers in the ſame way; and, as thoſe articles cannot be ſold without loſs, numberleſs miſdemeanours are the conſequence. Money is always very rare wherever the ſovereigns do not receive impoſts in ſpecie. This ſcarcity irritates avarice on the one hand, while, on the other, ſlavery foments luxury. People wiſh to appear great in proportion as their real conſequence is diminiſhed; and therefore, when almoſt annihilated by arbitrary power, the Chineſe cannot diſpenſe with embroidered clothes.

In a country of ſlavery a poll-tax is ſo natural, that the Chineſe, who have murmured againſt all others, have ſupported that impoſt patiently. But the extracts of their regiſters of capitation, ſuch as they have appeared in Europe, are altogether falſe, as we have proved in the ſecond article of this work. We ſhall not repeat here what has been ſaid concerning the population of that country; but it certainly does not amount to eighty millions of ſouls. The Tartars found only eleven million fifty-two thouſand eight hundred and twelve families, which multiplied by five, would not make ſixty millions. Conſidering the prodigious extent of China, it is much more thinly inhabited than Germany; and it would be ſtill leſs populous but for the favorable climate of the ſouthern provinces, which, according to the miſſionaries, are far better peopled than thoſe of the north.

As the political inſtitutions of that empire have not the ſmalleſt analogy with the government of ancient Egypt, neither ſacerdotal nor military families were

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ever ſeen there. The Chineſe ſoldiers, contrary to the regulations of the *Calaſires* and *Hermotybes*, carry on commerce, exerciſe trades, and cultivate lands, as was cuſtomary at all times, even before portions were aſſigned to the eight banners of the Mandhuis. If we are to believe Father Amiot, the pay of each foot ſoldier coſts the emperor *Kien-long* twenty-five ſhillings every month, of which one half is paid in money, and the other in rice; while that of a horſeman is thirty-ſeven ſhillings and ſixpence, paid in the ſame manner with the former *.

In general, the maintenance of troops coſts more in deſpotic ſtates than elſewhere; but it is not probable that all the Chineſe forces, which may be divided into five claſſes, are on the ſame footing. The firſt comprehends the cavalry: they have no fire-arms of any kind; becauſe the Tartars, who perhaps underſtand this part of tactics better than any other, are convinced that bows are much preferable to muſketoons; and they continue, like all the Parthians and Scythians, to ſhoot arrows when in full gallop. The ſecond diviſion is compoſed of cannoniers and arquebuſiers: the third of pike-men: the fourth of infantry, who uſe bows: and, laſt of all, thoſe who are armed with ſwords and bucklers.

The exerciſe of all theſe troops, ſo very differently armed, reſembles a theatrical play in the colored prints at the end of the work entitled *Art Militaire des Chinois*. The moſt ludicrous of all their farces is

* Chineſe Art of War, p. 30.

performed by the infantry, who conceal themſelves behind bucklers, which are placed in ſuch a manner as to reſemble a flower, called by the Chineſe *mei-hoa*; and, for this purpoſe, five men are obliged to lie upon each other horizontally. Theſe buffoons afterwards counterfeit thoſe Scythian dragons, called *lu*, or *loung*, with which their colors are covered; and then they become tygers, ſpringing from under their ſhields as from a thicket to ſeize their prey. But their grand manœuvre is to imitate *the projection of the moon, which ſerves as a buckler to the mountains*, or, as the Chineſe expreſs themſelves, *yen yue pai-chan tchen* *. In a general evolution, where the five bodies of militia are employed, a repreſentation is given of the four corners of the earth, which they believe to be ſquare, and of the rotundity of the ſky. This is practiſed by mixing the cavalry with the infantry, in ſuch a manner that it is almoſt impoſſible to form any diſtinct idea of it. Father Amiot himſelf ſeems to have been very ignorant of the matter; for, to all appearance, the prints ſent by him from Pe-kin to Paris, repreſent only imaginary manœuvres, or military amuſements, and, at all events, they did not deſerve to be engraved.

We have not been able to aſcertain how many troops the Tartars continue to keep on foot ſince the conqueſt; but they cannot be very numerous, if we

* Chineſe Art of War, p. 348.—From the dragons on the Scythian ſtandards, ſeems to have been derived the word Dragoon, ſignifying a ſoldier who ſerves either on foot or on horſe; and Alexander is ſaid to have adopted that term after the Perſians.

believe

believe the emperor *Kien-long*, who pretended that one Mandhui could eaſily ſubdue ten men: let it be underſtood, however, that they muſt be Chineſe, particularly when concealed under their ſhields to imitate the flower *mei-hoa*, or the *projection of the moon*.

The emperor *Kien-long* could not be ignorant, that the conqueſt of China by his anceſtors was owing in a great meaſure to the almoſt incredible diſorder into which the eunuchs had plunged that country, as well as to the wretched ſtate of the Chineſe militia. Father Trigault, who ſaw thoſe troops previous to the entry of the Tartars into Pe-kin, declares, that ſuch a collection of vile wretches had not been ſeen for many ages in Aſia. They conſiſted in great part of ſlaves belonging to the emperor as well as to private people, and all equally capable of the moſt infamous functions. They, or their fathers, had been ſold and reduced into ſlavery for different crimes; and, although called ſoldiers, they were nothing more than banditti *.

The magiſtrates of China are divided into nine orders; and this inſtitution ſeems to be founded entirely on the ſuperſtitious infatuation of the Chineſe for the number nine. Some of our authors ſpeak with admiration of thoſe prodigious examinations undergone by candidates, previous to their being admitted to the office of mandarin. The origin of this

* *Nulla gens æquè vilis atque iners eſt quam militaris apud Sinas... Maxima pars regia ſunt municipia vel propriis, vel majorum ſuorum ſceleribus perpetuam ſervientes ſervitutem. Iidem quo tempore a bellicis exercitationibus vacant infima quæque officia, bajulorum, mulionum, et inhoneſtiora, etiam ſervitia exercent.* Exped. apud Sinas, p. 100.

cuſtom

cuſtom is eaſily conceived, when we reflect upon the nature of the Chineſe characters. In Europe, it is eaſy to be convinced in half an hour whether or not a perſon can read and write. But in China, on the contrary, this requires a long ſcrutiny; for a man of letters, who ſhould have made himſelf acquainted with ten thouſand characters, does not perhaps know more than three thouſand. Many proofs are therefore neceſſary to determine the real extent of his learning, and how far he can compoſe in writing, which, if done with perſpicuity, is ſo very difficult, that few of the literati are capable of effecting it, as we learn from the miſſionaries. The loweſt claſs of merchants at Canton have generally a ſmall proviſion of characters by heart, ſufficient for their mercantile affairs; and, beyond that, they neither know how to read nor write. Thus it became neceſſary to inſtitute thoſe long examinations in China, which are common in all the other deſpotic ſtates of Aſia. In Turkey the cadis and imans are not admitted, without having undergone ſome proofs; but money can render the Turks and Chineſe much more learned than all their ſtudies. It is publiſhed even on the theatres of China, ſays Mr. Torrens, that the places under government are all venal, as well as the office of mandarin *. Beſides, the want of public ſchools is a great obſtacle to the elevation of thoſe who are born without ſome fortune, and whoſe parents have not the means of paying a private tutor.

* Reiſe nach China.

That

That claſs of men, who require moſt to be ſtrictly examined in China, are ſubject to no ſuch formality. We ſpeak here of the medical profeſſion, which is open to every perſon without any obligation to ſtudy the art of healing. The firſt relations, ſays Morhoff, publiſhed by the miſſionaries in Europe, gave high ideas of the Chineſe phyſicians; but when the work of Cleyer appeared, continues he, the enthuſiaſm ceaſed, and their admirers have been covered with ridicule *. Not one Chineſe has any knowledge either of the internal parts or anatomy of the human body. The work of Dionis has indeed been publiſhed in the Tartar language; but all the miſſionaries together could not have tranſlated it into Chineſe; and that book, ſo little eſteemed in Europe, is certainly not ſufficient to form an anatomiſt. All the real ſciences have been neglected beyond belief among the Chineſe; and their conduct towards phyſicians was entirely oppoſite to that of the Egyptians, who were accuſed in this point of extreme ſeverity. Some Greeks pretend, that they inflicted death on thoſe who ſwerved from the rules preſcribed in the Hermetic books for the treatment of patients. We have already obſerved, that, in epidemical diſorders proceeding always from the ſame cauſe, and accompanied invariably with ſimilar ſymptoms, the Egyptians were

* *Cleyerus nuper nobis revelavit medica Chinenſium myſteria, quæ ubi in lucem protracta ſunt, riſum potius, quam applauſum merentur; ac merito pudorem illis incutiunt, qui Europæ medicinæ objicere non ſunt veriti perfectionem medicinæ Chinenſis.* Morh. Polihiſt. lib. i.

right

right in adopting fixed medical rules Every ſick perſon would certainly prefer being arbitrarily treated by a ſkilful doctor to all formularies whatever: but, when practitioners are ignorant, it is ſome comfort to have their preſcriptions confined to a particular form. We ſpeak however of the Egyptian regulations on this point, without being able to aſcertain any thing; becauſe they are not ſufficiently known It is believed, from paſſages in Iſocrates and ſome other ancient authors, that the phyſicians in Egypt were not allowed to employ any medicines more violent than thoſe contained in their pharmacopeia. But the puniſhment of death was moſt probably confined to oculiſts, dentiſts, and ſurgeons, who had taken upon themſelves to adminiſter drugs improperly, beyond the bounds of their art. The Egyptians had very ſevere laws againſt murder; and the crime appeared to them nearly the ſame, whether a poor wretch was aſſaſſinated in his bed or on the high-way.

No lawyers are found among thoſe men called the literati of China; becauſe the parties have to appear before the judge, as in Turkey, and throughout the whole of the Eaſt. Some have pretended that their knowledge in the practice of the civil law was very extenſive: but, in fact, they are totally ignorant of the matter, as may be demonſtrated even from the teſtimony of the miſſionaries, who have moſt exalted the qualifications of the Aſiatics. No appeal can be made there from any ſentence whatever. This is no leſs oppoſite to the principles of civil law, than conformable to the inſtitutions of a deſpotic ſtate.

" However

"However the law may reſtrain a Chineſe magiſtrate in criminal caſes," ſays Father du Halde, "he is almoſt abſolute in civil matters. All conteſts "relative to the property of private perſons are "judged by the great officers of the provinces without any appeal; although, in affairs of conſequence, complaints may be lodged before the ſovereign court at Pe-kin *."

People are allowed likewiſe to complain even at Tunis and Morocco; but no appeals are admitted there in civil procedures, which are more ſubject to injuſtice than all others. It is ſeldom that a judge can be led to act partially in criminal cauſes, which tend to diſturb public tranquillity; but he may be corrupted in different modes, when an action concerns only private intereſts. The prohibition of appeals is the more unpardonable when the rules of juriſprudence are neglected in the procedures; and, to prove that this is the caſe in China, we have only to extract a paſſage from the work of Father du Halde.

"Although the governor of the province," ſays he, "has under him the four great officers, and each "mandarin is provided always with one or ſometimes "two aſſeſſors; yet the affairs are not ordinarily de-"cided by a plurality of votes. When the parties "are brought before the tribunal, or *yamen*, of any "magiſtrate of whatever rank, after ſome few formalities obſerved by the regiſters, bailiffs, and other ſuch "people, he pronounces according to his own will; "and ſometimes orders the perſon, who has loſt his "ſuit, to receive a number of baſtinadoes."

* Deſcription of China, vol. i.

This

This is exactly the method of the Turks, without the ſmalleſt difference. More cauſes are judged and decided there in an hour, than the tribunal of thirty at Thebes could have inveſtigated in a month. The deteſtable cuſtom of pronouncing without collecting votes, and of beating the pleaders afterwards, could never have been introduced or maintained but in ſtates completely deſpotic. Slaves are governed by the cudgel, and men by the law.

The pride of the Chineſe proceeds from their ignorance and their ſervitude: for other nations of Aſia, not more free, are no leſs puffed up with ideas of their own conſequence. Their adherence to ancient rites is the effect of education; and their attachment to their native country is produced by the worſhip rendered to anceſtors, near whoſe tombs it is neceſſary to remain. Patriotiſm cannot exiſt in an empire ſo extenſive as China. When ſome people of former times poſſeſſed no other domains than a town and a few fields round the ramparts, the love of their country was extreme; becauſe they knew each other, and their common poſſeſſions. But a Chineſe, born at Pe-kin, does not underſtand the language of a native of Canton; and how can ſuch people conſider themſelves as countrymen? This diverſity of dialects can be uſeful to the deſpot alone, by preventing the provinces from conſpiring together ſuddenly; and China, for the ſame reaſon, has no poſts for conveying private letters. Correſpondence in that way would be too alarming for the government; and it appears by different relations, that the emperor is frequently under the

the neceſſity of employing ſoldiers to eſcort his own couriers.

Thus China diſcovers nothing in point of legiſlation more wonderful than the other empires of the Eaſt. They ſubſiſt, becauſe it would be ſurpriſing indeed that a uſurper ſhould not be found whenever a ſovereign is wanting. Perſia has been an empire from the days of Cyrus to thoſe of *Kerim-kan*; and nothing but ſome phyſical revolution, not to be expected, can prevent it from continuing ſuch for many ages longer.

No ſooner is one Chineſe dynaſty hurled from the throne, than ſome perſon preſents himſelf for the ſucceſſion. The people have not time to reflect: The provinces are ignorant of the event, though the man is already in poſſeſſion of the ſovereign powers. Frequently the ſubjects neither know who the perſon is, nor whence he came; and they learn all thoſe circumſtances only when his power is eſtabliſhed. China has had a ſhoemaker at one time, and the cook of a convent at another, for its emperors; and no country, except India, during the dynaſty of the Moguls, ever ſaw ſo many ſovereigns dethroned, ſlaughtered, and poiſoned, without reckoning the one who hung himſelf at the arrival of the Tartars.

Many dreadful misfortunes would have been avoided in that country, had the order of ſucceſſion been regulated among the deſcendants of the emperor: but the thing is abſolutely impoſſible, becauſe the ſovereign there will not admit of any curb. The Mandhuis have no better political inſtitutions on that head than the Chineſe. The emperor *Can-hi* amuſed himſelf

himſelf with the fate of his children. When poiſoned, the Chineſe Gazette announced them dead of an apoplexy; and by the intrigues of the ſeraglio, hitherto not fully revealed, *Yong tcheng* came to the throne; although all the aſtrologers of the empire would have laid wagers to the contrary. The hiſtory of deſpotic empires can never be written in a manner either inſtructive or ſatisfactory. Great events are there decided by cauſes, which could not be related without ſhame, even when well atteſted. The Chineſe are fooliſh enough to believe that anciently the wife of one of the emperors was employed in writing the tranſactions of the ſeraglio, to communicate them to the annaliſts of the empire. No perſon, however, has ſeen a ſingle leaf of thoſe memoirs, which would have merited no more belief than the Court Gazettes. The emperors, ſays Father Amiot, frequently receive compliments from the great colleges on the victories which theſe gazettes announce; while the flattered princes know beyond a doubt that their troops have been entirely defeated. Of this however the people and the great colleges are ignorant; for both officers and ſoldiers are forbidden, under pain of death, to give information of what paſſes. The general lies, and the army is ſilent.

This work was undertaken to ſhow that no two nations ever reſembled each other leſs than the Egyptians and Chineſe; and as that object is now, in my opinion, fully accompliſhed, it would be ſuperfluous to proceed any further in our reſearches.

THE END.